



Trade Policy Review Body

**REPORT OF THE TPRB FROM THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON
TRADE-RELATED DEVELOPMENTS**

(MID-OCTOBER 2022 TO MID-MAY 2023)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This WTO Trade Monitoring Report on trade-related developments arrives at a time when the global economy continues to be affected by multiple crises. The continuing war in Ukraine, events related to climate change, high food and energy prices, and inflation, as well as the lingering ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic, are having serious implications for the global economic environment.

2. The overall findings of this Report, as further detailed in the Specific Findings below, reveal that between mid-October 2022 and mid-May 2023, WTO Members introduced more trade-facilitating (182) than trade-restrictive (110) measures on goods, unrelated to the pandemic. The number of new export restrictions has outpaced that of import restrictions for the third time since the beginning of the Trade Monitoring Exercise. In the area of services, 74 new measures were introduced by WTO Members, mostly facilitating trade. The review period saw new support measures by governments, including various environmental impact reduction programmes. The implementation of new COVID-19 trade-related measures on goods, services, intellectual property, and general economic support by WTO Members declined over the past seven months.

3. Export restrictions, whether related to the COVID-19 pandemic or the war in Ukraine, including the food security crisis, continued to grab headlines, even as the pace of introduction of such measures slowed and several were rolled back. Globally, as of mid-May 2023, 63 export restrictions on food, feed and fertilizers were still in place, in addition to 21 COVID-19-related export restrictions. Many of these measures were introduced in the immediate aftermath of the outbreak of the pandemic and a similar pattern was observed following the start of the war in Ukraine. These developments were described in the November 2022 Trade Monitoring Report. For both crises, initial and often comprehensive export bans were subsequently replaced with other restrictions, such as quotas and licensing requirements, and many were later notified to the WTO. From a transparency point of view, this is important as it suggests that policy makers value the predictability of multilateral trade rules.

4. The pronounced weakening of merchandise trade, which slumped during the fourth quarter of 2022 and appeared to have remained below trend in the first quarter of 2023, is of concern. World merchandise trade volume growth was expected to slow in 2022 and in early 2023, before picking up in 2024.

5. The disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine have pushed economic security to the forefront of policy discussions. Over the past couple of years, economies have consistently used the multilateral trading system to adjust to market and supply challenges, stressing the importance for a strong multilateral trading system based on WTO rules.

6. The successful conclusion of the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12) in June 2022 secured a series of unprecedented multilaterally agreed outcomes and demonstrated that multilateral cooperation on trade can deliver. Work is already under way to build on these outcomes at MC13 in early 2024 and a Senior Officials meeting will take place on 23-24 October 2023 to ensure that MC13 produces outcomes that help all economies to build a fairer, more just and more resilient economic future.

7. WTO Members must work collectively to ensure the success of the ministerial meeting and for reinvigorating the multilateral trading system and boosting the world economy.

Specific findings

8. This Report is set against a backdrop of **pronounced weakening of merchandise trade**, which slumped during the fourth quarter of 2022 and appears to have remained below trend in the first quarter of 2023. World merchandise trade volume growth was expected to slow from 2.7% in 2022 to a subpar 1.7% in 2023, before picking up to 3.2% in 2024. Growth in 2022 was weighed down by the war in Ukraine, stubbornly high inflation, and tighter monetary policy. However, the continuing relaxation of pandemic control measures should provide a boost to trade in 2023, particularly in travel-related services.

9. **Inflation is growing across the world causing further uncertainty.** In 2022, inflation was the highest some countries have experienced in decades and was exacerbated by price spikes in primary commodities whose supplies were impacted by the war in Ukraine, the food security crisis, and rising energy prices.

10. The COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine have both caused significant **disruption to global supply chains**. With geopolitical tensions rising, countries are increasingly looking for ways to develop resilience. The use of the multilateral trading system by countries to adjust to market and supply challenges over the past couple of years has emphasized the need for a strong rules-based multilateral trading system.

11. The pace of implementation of new **export restrictions** by WTO Members has increased since 2020, first in the context of the pandemic and subsequently with the war in Ukraine and the food security crisis. Although some of these have been rolled back, as of mid-May 2023, 63 export restrictions on food, feed and fertilizers were still in place, in addition to 21 COVID-19-related export restrictions on essential products.

12. During the review period, WTO Members introduced **182 new trade-facilitating and 110 trade-restrictive measures on goods, unrelated to the pandemic**. Most trade-facilitating measures were import measures and most trade-restrictive measures were export measures. For the third time since the beginning of the Trade Monitoring Exercise the number of new export restrictions has outpaced that of import restrictions. The trade coverage of trade-facilitating measures introduced during the review period was estimated at USD 703.7 billion (down from USD 1,160.5 billion in the last report) and that of trade-restrictive measures at USD 110.5 billion (down from USD 278.0 billion).

13. The **stockpile** of import restrictions in force remained important with no sign of any meaningful roll-back of existing measures. By the end of 2022, 9.2% of global imports were affected by import restrictions implemented since 2009 and which are still in force.

14. In 2021 and 2022, initiations of **trade remedy** investigations by WTO Members declined sharply while terminations of trade remedy actions increased. During the review period, the average number of trade remedy initiations (10.3 per month) was the second lowest since 2012 and that of terminations (8.1) the lowest since 2012. Trade remedy actions remained an important trade policy tool for many WTO Members, accounting for 30.6% of all non-COVID-19-related trade measures on goods recorded in this Report. Anti-dumping continued to be the most frequent trade remedy action in terms of initiations and terminations.

15. The significant decline in the number of initiations of trade remedies observed since 2021 may represent an important change in the landscape of trade measures. There may be several reasons for this recent decline. For example, in the case of both the pandemic and more recently the war in Ukraine, countries appear to have focused on making sure that their territories remained well-stocked and accessible for a wide range of products. Such policies may have impacted the use of the trade remedies instrument.

16. Most of the 74 new **services** measures introduced during the review period were of a trade-facilitating nature. Almost half of the measures were horizontal affecting different modes of supply across various sectors, one third related to telecommunications or financial services trade, and the rest related to business services, health, tourism and travel, and transport services.

17. The review period saw the introduction of numerous new **economic support measures** by WTO Members, including environmental impact reduction programmes, renewable-energy production schemes or support for energy efficiency and decarbonization and for clean- and renewable-energy projects. Other measures included various support programmes for the agricultural sector.

18. The implementation of new **COVID-19 trade-related measures** by WTO Members declined over the past 7 months, with 17 such measures recorded on goods. Most of these measures consisted of reductions of customs duties, terminations of existing measures or amendments of others. Most of the 454 trade and trade-related measures in the area of goods have been implemented by WTO Members and Observers since the beginning of the pandemic were of a

trade-facilitating nature (55.3%) while the rest might be considered trade-restrictive (44.7%). Members continued to phase out the pandemic-related measures, and in particular the restrictive ones. By mid-May 2023, 83.7% of the export restrictions had been rolled back, leaving 21 restrictions in place.

19. No new COVID-19-related services measures were reported by WTO Members, but many measures introduced in 2020 remain in place. Since the beginning of the pandemic, 156 COVID-19-related services measures were identified, with 22 reported as terminated by mid-May 2023. The number of new COVID-19-related support measures to mitigate the social and economic impacts of the pandemic fell sharply.

20. WTO Members continued to use the **SPS and TBT Committees' transparency mechanisms** to notify their sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) and technical barriers to trade (TBT) measures and to discuss and often resolve specific trade concerns (STCs) non-litigiously. Human health and food safety were the most frequent objectives identified in the regular SPS notifications submitted by WTO Members during the review period. Members continued discussions at the SPS Committee meetings to advance the work programme that emerged from MC12. Most new STCs raised in the SPS Committee during the review period concerned animal health/animal diseases and food safety. WTO Members submitted 127 SPS notifications and communications on measures taken in response to the pandemic. Most new regular TBT notifications submitted by WTO Members during the review period indicated quality requirements as their main objective. A total of 155 STCs were discussed during the review period. Members have submitted 226 COVID-19-related TBT notifications to the WTO in response to the pandemic since 2020.

21. The number of **trade concerns raised** in WTO Committees and bodies has been increasing yearly, in some cases sharply. Members continued to use WTO bodies to address their trade concerns and engage trading partners on real or potential areas of friction.

22. In the **Committee on Agriculture (CoA)**, Members posed 225 questions during the review period on Specific Implementation Matters (SIMs), individual notifications, and overdue notifications. Domestic support dominated the discussions with export restrictions on foodstuffs and food security also addressed.

23. WTO Members continued to fine-tune their **intellectual property (IP)** regimes and phased out many pandemic-related measures, while some formalized the utilization of online procedures created during lockdowns. Members continued their discussions on the possible extension of the TRIPS Decision adopted at MC12 on COVID-19 diagnostics and therapeutics.

24. Discussions on **global environment issues**, including the circular economy and plastics pollution, trade and climate change, and biodiversity, intensified at the WTO. During the review period, an important moment for water was attained as global leaders and key policy makers engaged in the UN Water Conference (UNWC). The Dialogue on Plastics Pollution and Environmentally Sustainable Plastics Trade Initiative introduced the coordinators' draft vision on the way forward and elements for a potential outcome at MC13.

25. This Report also covers several other important trade-related developments and discussions that took place during the review period, including **fisheries subsidies; e-commerce; Aid for Trade; government procurement; trade facilitation; trade finance; micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs); and women's economic empowerment**.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. This WTO Trade Monitoring Report¹ reviews trade and trade-related developments during the period from 16 October 2022 to 15 May 2023.² It is a mid-year preparatory contribution to the annual report by the Director-General provided for in paragraph G of the Trade Policy Review Mechanism (TPRM) mandate, which aims to assist the Trade Policy Review Body (TPRB) in undertaking an annual overview of developments in the international trading environment that are having an impact on the multilateral trading system.

1.2. The Report is issued under the sole responsibility of the Director-General of the WTO. It is a factual transparency exercise and has no legal effect on the rights and obligations of WTO Members. It is without prejudice to the negotiating positions of Members and has no legal implication with respect to the conformity of any measure noted in the Report with any WTO agreement or any provision thereof. It does not seek to establish whether a trade measure is protectionist, and it does not question the right of Members to take certain trade measures (see Box 1.1 below).

1.3. The Trade Monitoring Reports aim to provide transparency on the very latest trends and developments in the implementation of a broad range of trade policy measures and offer an update on the main indicators of the world economy and on the state of global trade. The regular discussions of the Reports among Members in the TPRB provide important input and perspective to the Trade Monitoring Exercise, including on the coverage and analysis of trade-related issues.

1.4. This Report is again released in a global economic environment facing multiple challenges. Although the World Health Organization recently ended the global emergency status for COVID-19 more than three years after its original declaration³, the world continues to deal with the aftereffects of this health crisis, including with respect to access to vaccines in certain parts of the world. The updated lists of measures implemented in the context of the pandemic are available on the COVID-19 page of the WTO website⁴ and cover the areas of goods, services, and intellectual property (IP), as well as measures communicated by Members on general economic support. The lists presented on the website are updated regularly and are not exhaustive. This information is provided for transparency purposes and does not question the right of WTO Members to implement any of the measures listed. The full list of notifications received by the WTO Secretariat in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic is also available on the WTO website.⁵

1.5. The war in Ukraine continues to represent an immense humanitarian crisis. Although the trade response to the war was swift, especially with respect to export restrictions, the period covered by this Report shows that such measures are gradually being rolled back. Yet many trade-restrictive measures implemented immediately after the outbreak of the war remain in place, exacerbating the food security crisis in many parts of the world and creating uncertainty for the global economy and international trade. Under its trade monitoring mandate, the WTO Secretariat continues to monitor and provide transparency around the wide range of trade-related measures taken in response to these crises.

1.6. Information on measures included in this Report and its Annexes has been collated from inputs submitted by WTO Members and Observers and from other official and public sources. Overall, responses to the Director-General's request for information and to the subsequent verification request were received from 73 Members (counting the European Union and its member States separately) (Box 1.2), which represents 44.5% of the membership, and covers around 90.0% of

¹ The previous WTO Trade Monitoring Report presented to the TPRB (WTO document WT/TPR/OV/25, 22 November 2022) covered measures between mid-October 2021 and mid-October 2022. The WTO Trade Monitoring Reports have been prepared by the WTO Secretariat since 2009. On 4 July 2023, the WTO Secretariat, together with the Secretariats of the OECD and UNCTAD, issued the G20 Reports on trade and investment measures implemented by G20 economies during the period mid-October 2022 to mid-May 2023 (available on the WTO website).

² Unless otherwise indicated in the relevant section. In addition to the trade policy measures implemented during the period under review and captured by this Report, other actions that impact trade flows may have been taken by WTO Members.

³ Viewed at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/05/1136367>

⁴ WTO, *COVID-19 and World Trade*. Viewed at: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/covid19_e/covid19_e.htm.

⁵ WTO, *WTO Members' Notifications on COVID-19*. Viewed at: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/covid19_e/notifications_e.htm.

world imports. Three Observers also replied to the request for information. Where it has not been possible to confirm the information, this is noted in the Annexes.

1.7. In response to calls from WTO Members, most recently in the context of the 7th Appraisal of the TPRM, to streamline the Trade Monitoring Exercise, and in particular the information-gathering of trade measures, the WTO Secretariat in early 2023 introduced a digital platform for submitting and verifying trade measures. The principal objectives of this platform are to further participation in the Trade Monitoring Exercise and to facilitate the exchange of information between the Secretariat and delegations, particularly during the verification process. In April 2023, the Secretariat hosted an information meeting on the platform for all delegations, including the presentation of tutorials to guide Members and Observers through the process of submitting and verifying measures. Overall, the digital platform has performed well during this first attempt even if, as with any introduction of new IT tools, some features can be modified and improved. Delegations have provided useful inputs to this end.

1.8. This mid-year Report maintains the structure of the July 2022 version. In other words, the coverage of trade and trade-related measures implemented during the review period, specific COVID-19 related developments and, if applicable, developments in the context of the war in Ukraine and the food security crisis is maintained. Section 2 of the Report provides a brief account of recent economic and trade developments and includes the most recent forecasts for world trade growth. Section 3 presents selected trade and trade-related policy trends for the review period. Policy developments in trade in services and trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPS) are included in Sections 4 and 5, respectively.

1.9. A separate Addendum to this Report contains Annexes with new regular measures recorded during the review period. Measures implemented outside of this period are not included in these Annexes. Information on all regular trade measures recorded since the beginning of the Trade Monitoring Exercise in October 2008 with an indication of their status, as updated by WTO delegations, is available through the Trade Monitoring Database (TMDB).⁶

1.10. Preparations for WTO's 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13) in early 2023 are already under way. Follow-up on the multilaterally agreed outcomes at MC12 on fisheries subsidies, the WTO response to the current and future pandemics, including a waiver of certain IP requirements concerning compulsory licensing for COVID-19 vaccines, food security, the extension of the moratorium on e-commerce, and on WTO reform will require determination and commitment by all WTO Members. The Senior Officials meeting in Geneva on 23-24 October will provide an important opportunity to take stock of preparations for MC13. WTO Members must work collectively to ensure the success of MC13 and for reinvigorating the multilateral trading system and boosting the world economy.

1.11. Finally, the OECD, the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the Global Trade Alert have contributed topical boxes to this Report.

⁶ WTO, *Trade Monitoring Database*. Viewed at: <http://tmdb.wto.org>.

Box 1.1 About the WTO Trade Monitoring Report

The Trade Monitoring Report is first and foremost a transparency exercise. It is intended to be purely factual and has no legal effect on the rights and obligations of WTO Members. It is without prejudice to Members' negotiating positions and has no legal implication with respect to the conformity of any measure noted in the Report with any WTO Agreement or any provision thereof.

The Report aims to shed light on the latest trends in the implementation of a broad range of policy measures that facilitate as well as restrict the flow of trade and provide an update on the state of global trade. The Report neither seeks to pronounce itself on whether a trade measure is protectionist, nor does it question the right of Members to take certain trade measures. The Reports continue to evolve in terms of the coverage and analysis of trade-related issues and take into account discussions among WTO Members in the Trade Policy Review Body (TPRB).

Regarding trade remedy actions, it has been highlighted in discussions among WTO Members that some of these measures are taken to address what is perceived by some as a market distortion resulting from trade practices of entities in another trading partner. The WTO Anti-Dumping and the Subsidies and Countervailing Measures Agreements permit WTO Members to impose anti-dumping (AD) or countervailing (CVD) duties to offset what is perceived to be injurious dumping or subsidization of products exported from one Member to another. The Reports are not able to establish if, where or when such perceived distortive practices have taken place. The Reports have never categorized the use of trade remedies as protectionist or WTO-inconsistent or criticized governments for utilizing them. The main objective of monitoring these measures is to provide additional transparency and to identify emerging trends in the application of trade policy measures.

With respect to Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) measures covered in the Report, it is important to emphasize that they are neither classified nor counted as trade-restrictive or trade-facilitating, and the increasing trend with respect to the number of notifications of such measures is carefully linked to the transparency provisions of the SPS and TBT Agreements only. The Reports have consistently underlined the basic premise that an increased number of SPS and TBT notifications does not automatically imply greater use of protectionist or unnecessarily trade-restrictive measures, but rather enhanced transparency regarding these measures. Finally, the Reports clearly emphasize that the SPS and TBT Agreements specifically allow Members to take measures in the pursuit of a number of legitimate policy objectives.

The WTO Secretariat strives to ensure that the Trade Monitoring Reports are factual and objective. Since 2009, the Reports have sought to provide a nuanced perspective to developments in international trade. For example, the Reports have consistently emphasized that although the number of specific and often long-term restrictive trade measures remains a source of serious concern, other key factors may influence trade developments. During discussions of the Trade Monitoring Reports at the TPRB, Members have also drawn attention to this point and to the fact that, with respect to both, vigilance remains imperative.

Source: WTO Secretariat.

Box 1.2 Participation in the preparation of this Report

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. Albania | 26. Mauritius |
| 2. Argentina | 27. Mexico |
| 3. Australia | 28. Mongolia |
| 4. Azerbaijan (Observer) | 29. Montenegro |
| 5. Brazil | 30. Mozambique |
| 6. Cambodia | 31. Myanmar |
| 7. Canada | 32. New Zealand |
| 8. Chile | 33. Norway |
| 9. China | 34. Paraguay |
| 10. Colombia | 35. Philippines |
| 11. Costa Rica | 36. Russian Federation |
| 12. Dominican Republic | 37. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia |
| 13. Ecuador | 38. Serbia (Observer) |
| 14. Egypt | 39. Seychelles |
| 15. El Salvador | 40. Singapore |
| 16. Ethiopia (Observer) | 41. Sri Lanka |
| 17. European Union ^a | 42. Switzerland |
| 18. Guatemala | 43. Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu (Chinese Taipei) |
| 19. Hong Kong, China | 44. Thailand |
| 20. India | 45. Türkiye |
| 21. Indonesia | 46. Ukraine |
| 22. Jamaica | 47. United Kingdom |
| 23. Japan | 48. United States |
| 24. Republic of Korea | 49. Uruguay |
| 25. Macao, China | |

a The European Union and its member States counted separately.

Source: WTO Secretariat.

2 RECENT ECONOMIC AND TRADE DEVELOPMENTS

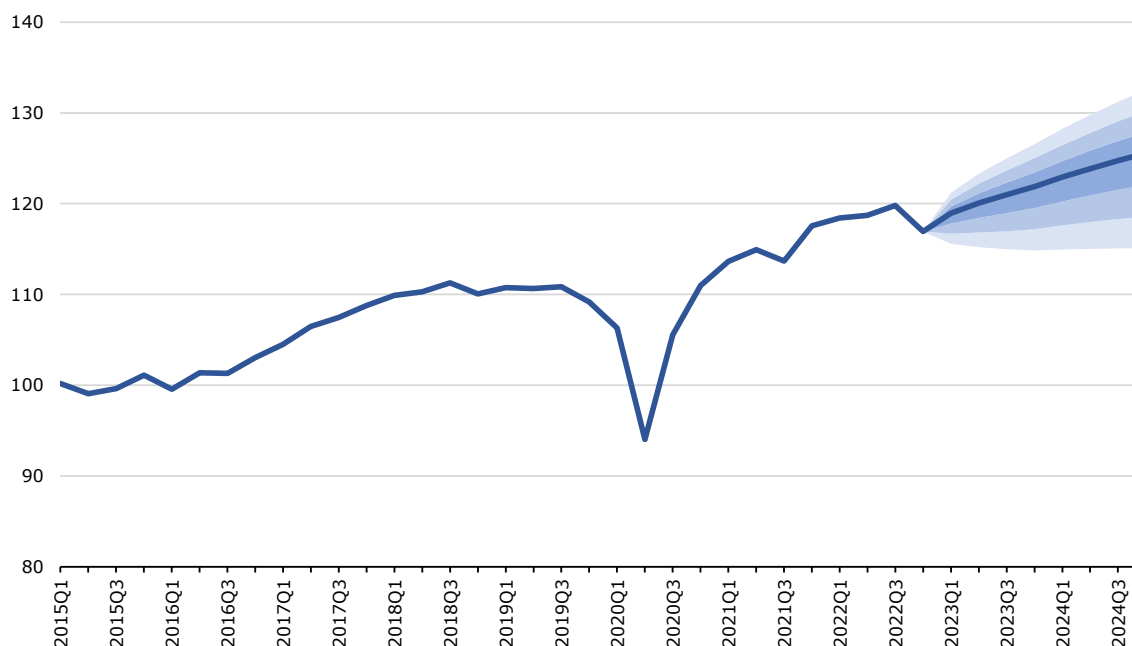
2.1 Merchandise trade volume and outlook

2.1. World merchandise trade volume slumped in the fourth quarter of 2022 and remained weak in the first quarter of 2023, weighed down by the war in Ukraine, stubbornly high inflation, and tighter monetary policy. The 2.4% quarter-on-quarter decline in Q4 dragged trade volume growth for 2022 down to 2.7%, below the WTO's forecast of 3.5% from last October, but better than the more pessimistic scenarios envisaged at the start of the war. The WTO's current forecast projects subpar growth of 1.7% in 2023 picking up to 3.2% in 2024, but the outlook remains clouded by downside risks including geopolitical tensions, food and energy insecurity, increased risk of financial instability, and high levels of external debt.¹

2.2. Chart 2.1 shows merchandise trade volume through 2022Q4 and projections through 2024Q4, including "error bands" to illustrate the degree of uncertainty associated with the forecast. The shaded area represents an approximate 85% confidence interval adjusted to reflect the predominance of downside risks. If current assumptions hold, merchandise trade volume growth in 2023 could be as low as -2.8% or as high as +4.7%.

Chart 2.1 Volume of world merchandise trade, 2015Q1-2024Q4

(Seasonally adjusted volume index, 2015=100)



Note: The shaded region represents both random variation and subjective assessment of risk.

Source: WTO and UNCTAD for historical data; WTO Secretariat estimates for forecasts.

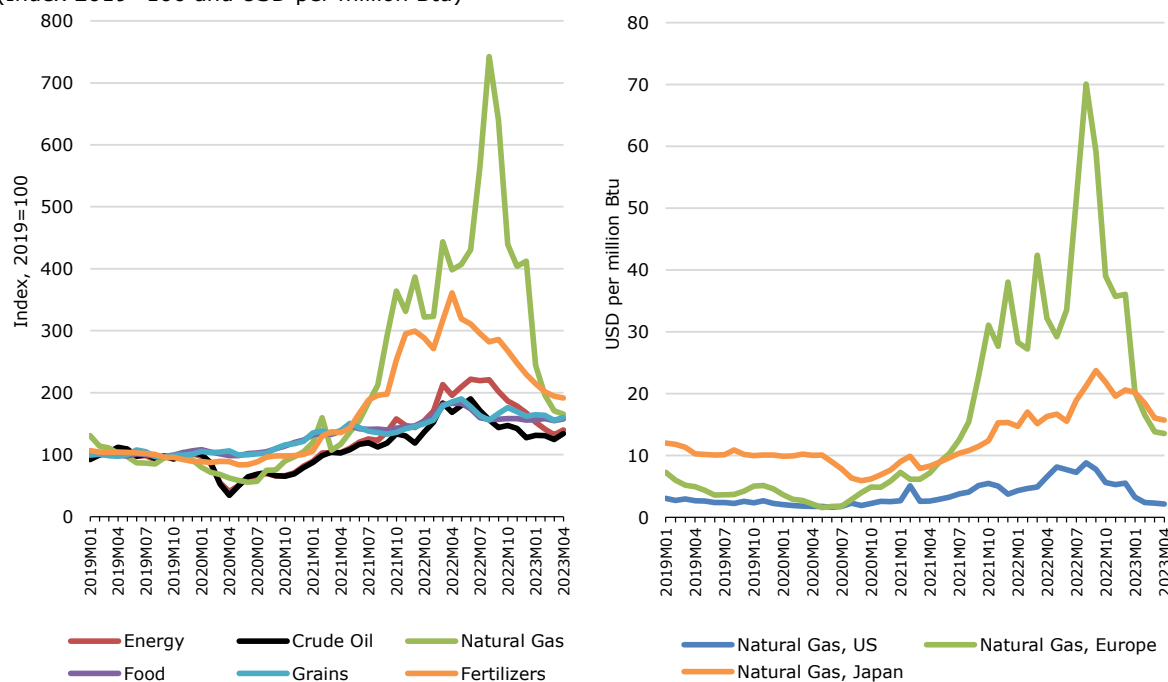
2.3. The slump in 2022Q4 was partly due to inflation and higher interest rates weighing on consumption and investment, and partly the result of the COVID-19 outbreak disrupting production and trade in China. The relaxation of Chinese pandemic controls is expected to provide a boost to global trade and output in 2023, particularly in travel-related services.

2.4. Inflation in 2022 was exacerbated by price spikes in primary commodities whose supplies were impacted by the war in Ukraine, notably food and energy (Chart 2.2). Energy prices had a strong impact on trade and output in European countries, while food prices were more keenly felt in Middle Eastern and African countries.

¹ This Section draws on the WTO's *Global Trade Outlook and Statistics*, issued on 5 April 2023.

Chart 2.2 Monthly average prices for primary commodities, January 2019–April 2023

(Index 2019=100 and USD per million Btu)



Source: World Bank.

2.5. Commodity prices have receded but remain high by historical standards. Natural gas prices in April 2023 were down 78% from their peak but were still 68% above their average level in 2019, before the pandemic. Similarly, global grain prices were 16% below their peak, but 60% higher than in 2019. Falling commodity prices have brought down headline inflation rates, but core inflation (excluding food and energy) remains high in many economies. For example, year-on-year growth in non-energy, non-food consumer prices stood at 5.6% in the United States and 5.7% in the Euro Area in March 2023, well above Central Banks' targets.

2.6. Interest rates hikes have also revealed weaknesses in banking systems that could lead to broader financial contagion if left unchecked. These stresses have complicated the job of Central Banks trying to tame inflation, sustain economic growth, and maintain financial stability.

2.7. Trade-related indicators show few signs of a turnaround to date in 2023. One such indicator is container shipping, which was down 5.3% year-on-year in 2023Q1 according to the RWI/ISL Container Throughput Index.

2.8. Another indicator is export orders from purchasing managers' indices (PMIs). The new export orders component of the J.P. Morgan Global Manufacturing PMI rose from 47.7 in March to 48.4 in April, but remained below the baseline value of 50, suggesting that trade continued to contract but at a slower rate. On a more positive note, other PMI components suggested an easing of inflationary pressures (input and output prices) and improved supply conditions (stocks of finished goods and supplier delivery times).

2.9. Table 2.1 shows merchandise trade volume and GDP growth by region from 2019 to 2024. The projected 1.7% increase in world trade in 2023 is stronger than the previous estimate of 1.0% from last October, partly due to a slight upward revision in GDP expectations and to changes in the regional distribution of economic activity.

2.10. Export growth in 2023 is expected to be strongest in North America (3.3%), followed by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (2.8%), Asia (2.5%), Europe (1.8%), the Middle East (0.9%), South America (0.3%) and Africa (-1.4%). The CIS should see a 14.9% increase in imports in 2023, in a rebounding from a 13.5% decline in 2022. Imports should also continue to grow in

Africa (5.6%), the Middle East (5.5%) and Asia (2.6%), while small contractions are expected in North America (-0.1%), Europe (-0.6%) and South America (-1.6%).

Table 2.1 Merchandise trade volume and GDP growth, 2019-24^a

(Annual % change)

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
World merchandise trade volume^b	0.4	-5.1	9.4	2.7	1.7	3.2
Exports						
North America	0.4	-8.9	6.5	4.2	3.3	3.1
South America ^c	-1.3	-4.9	5.8	1.9	0.3	0.6
Europe	0.4	-7.7	8.1	2.7	1.8	2.0
CIS ^d	-0.1	-0.9	-3.0	-4.9	2.8	2.2
Africa	-0.3	-7.2	3.5	0.7	-1.4	1.4
Middle East	-1.0	-6.6	-2.4	9.9	0.9	4.7
Asia	0.8	0.6	13.1	0.6	2.5	4.7
Imports						
North America	-0.6	-5.9	12.5	6.0	-0.1	1.4
South America ^c	-1.8	-10.8	25.6	4.2	-1.6	2.3
Europe	0.3	-7.2	8.5	5.2	-0.6	1.8
CIS ^d	8.3	-5.5	9.1	-13.5	14.9	0.8
Africa	3.3	-14.8	6.4	5.6	5.6	5.5
Middle East	11.2	-10.1	8.3	9.4	5.5	4.3
Asia	-0.5	-0.8	10.5	-0.4	2.6	5.2
World GDP at market exchange rates	2.6	-3.3	5.9	3.0	2.4	2.6
North America	2.1	-3.8	5.5	2.2	1.5	1.0
South America ^c	0.5	-6.5	7.4	4.0	1.4	2.0
Europe	1.7	-5.6	5.9	3.4	0.9	1.8
CIS ^d	2.6	-2.5	4.9	-0.9	-0.9	0.7
Africa	2.6	-2.4	4.7	3.4	3.5	3.9
Middle East	1.0	-4.1	4.2	5.8	2.9	3.1
Asia	4.0	-0.9	6.2	3.3	4.2	4.3
Memo: Least Developed Countries (LDCs)						
Volume of merchandise exports	0.2	-1.6	-2.6	2.0	4.8	9.1
Volume of merchandise imports	2.2	-11.0	7.4	3.6	4.8	5.4
Real GDP at market exchange rates	4.6	4.9	0.4	2.1	4.4	4.4

a Figures for 2023 and 2024 are projections. These projections incorporate mixed-data sampling (MIDAS) techniques for selected countries to take advantage of higher-frequency data such as container throughput and financial risk indices.

b Average of exports and imports.

c South and Central America and the Caribbean.

d Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), including certain associate and former member States.

Source: WTO Secretariat for trade and consensus estimates for GDP.

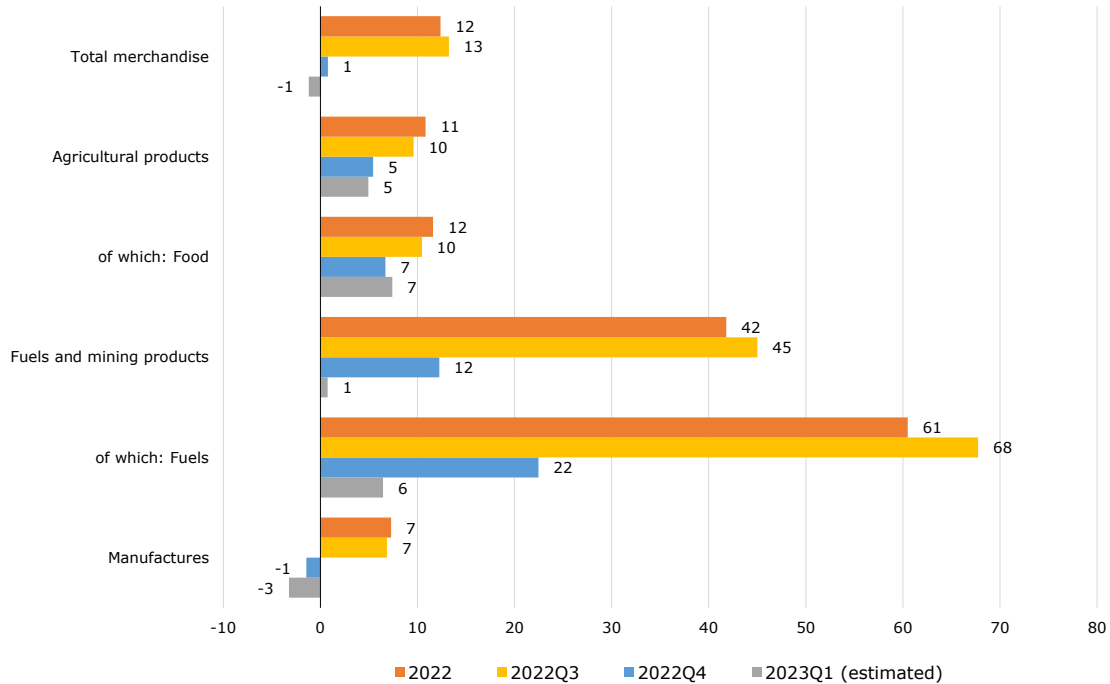
2.2 Trade developments in value terms

2.11. World merchandise trade increased by 12% in 2022 to USD 25.0 trillion, an all-time high (Chart 2.3). The increase mostly reflected higher commodity prices. Trade in fuels and mining products was up 42% while fuels alone jumped 61%. Food trade grew in line with merchandise trade (12%) while trade in manufactures grew more slowly (7%).

2.12. Merchandise trade slowed towards the end of 2022 and in the early months of 2023, reflecting both declining quantities and falling prices. Growth fell from 13% in 2022 Q3 to an estimated -1% in Q1 of 2023. Trade values for food and fuels were still up 6%-7% in 2023 Q1 but trade in manufactures fell 3%.

Chart 2.3 World merchandise trade growth by product, 2022Q3-2023Q1

(Year-on-year % change in USD values)



Note: World merchandise trade refers to average of exports and imports.

Source: WTO Secretariat.

2.13. Commercial services trade grew slightly faster than merchandise trade in 2022, rising by 15% to USD 6.8 trillion. All broad services categories saw growth, led by travel (79%) and transport (25%) as a result of the normalization of the health situation. The appreciation of the US dollar was partly responsible for the modest growth of other commercial services, including financial services. The euro and the pound depreciated by 11% and 10%, respectively, against the dollar in 2022, reducing the US dollar value of trade in Europe.

2.14. Commercial services trade also slowed in the fourth quarter of 2022. Year-on-year export growth in the United States dropped from 18% in 2022Q3 to 14% in Q4, while EU growth slowed from 6% to -2%, UK growth fell from 14% to -4% and Chinese growth declined from 17% to -7%.

3 TRADE AND TRADE-RELATED POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

3.1 Overview of trends identified during the review period

3.1. This Section provides analysis of selected trade and trade-related policy developments in the area of goods during the period from mid-October 2022 to mid-May 2023. It is divided into three parts. The first part looks at regular, i.e. non-COVID-19-related measures implemented during the review period, including calculations on trade coverage. The second part, in Section 3.1.2, covers measures taken in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. These COVID-19-related measures are not included in the trade coverage calculations and are not counted towards the aggregate numbers in part 1. The third part, in Section 3.1.3, provides an overview of trade-related developments in the context of the war in Ukraine and the food crisis since the beginning of the conflict.

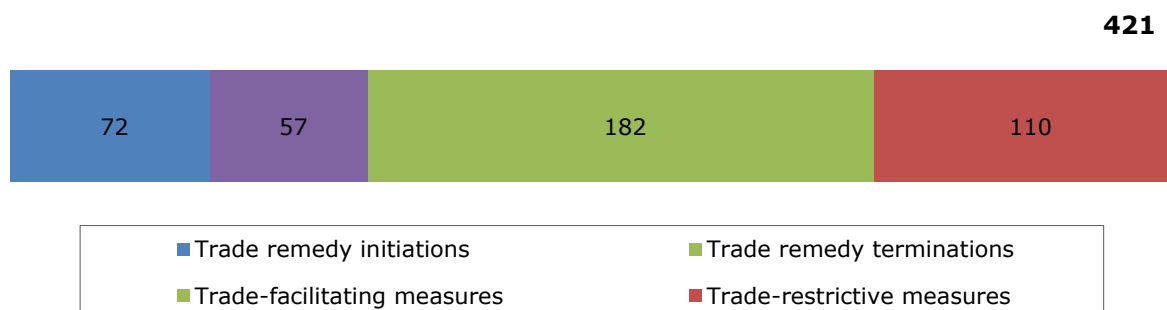
3.2. A separate Addendum¹ to this Report contains Annexes 1, 2 and 3 on recorded trade and trade-related measures taken by WTO Members and Observers from 16 October 2022 to 15 May 2023, in the area of trade in goods. Services measures are analysed in Section 4 of this Report and are listed in Annex 4 of the Addendum.

3.3. This separate Addendum lists new regular (non-COVID-19-related) measures recorded during the review period.

3.1.1 Regular trade measures

3.4. A total of 421 trade measures were recorded for WTO Members and Observers during the review period (Chart 3.1).² This figure includes measures facilitating trade, trade remedy measures and other trade and trade-related measures, i.e. trade-restrictive measures. Chart 3.2 illustrates the trade coverage³ of the measures recorded for WTO Members and Observers during the review period. These figures also include measures on food, feed, and fertilizers.

Chart 3.1 Number of measures introduced between mid-October 2022 and mid-May 2023

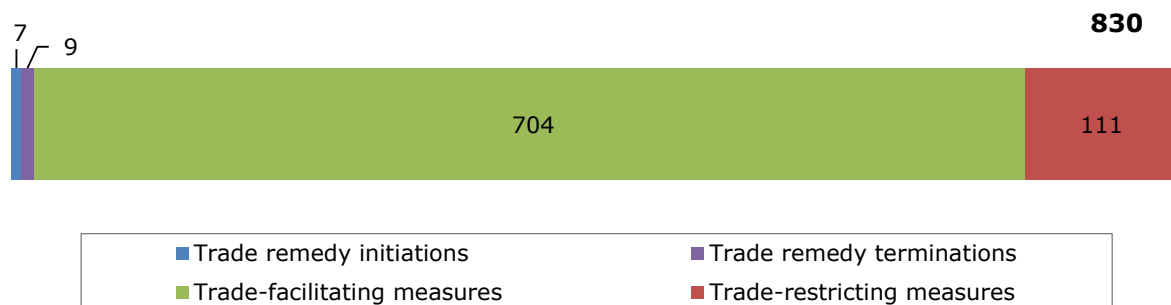


Source: WTO Secretariat.

¹ WTO document WT/TPR/OV/W/17/Add.1, 13 July 2023.

² These Annexes do not include SPS and TBT measures, which are covered in Sections 3.3 and 3.4.

³ The trade coverage does not include trade for measures that have been implemented and terminated within the review period. Trade coverage estimates for the review period were based on 2022 merchandise trade, when available. For several countries, 2021 merchandise trade was used as 2022 data were not available at the time of calculations.

Chart 3.2 Trade coverage of import and export measures introduced between mid-October 2022 and mid-May 2023 in USD billion

Note: Values are rounded. Trade-facilitating measures cover import and export-facilitating measures. Trade-restrictive measures cover import and export-restrictive measures.

Source: WTO Secretariat.

Measures facilitating trade

3.5. During the review period, 182 new trade-facilitating measures were recorded for WTO Members and Observers.⁴ This represents 43.2% of the total number of measures recorded.

3.6. Most of the trade-facilitating measures were on the import side. The reduction or elimination of import tariffs made up the bulk of trade-facilitating measures, followed by the elimination or simplification of export quantitative restrictions (QRs) and import QRs. The monthly average of 26.0 facilitating measures recorded for the period was the third highest since 2012 (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Measures facilitating trade (Annex 1), 2015-22

Type of measure	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Mid-Oct 21 to mid-Oct 22 (WT/TPR/OV/25)	Mid-Oct 22 to mid-May 23 (7 months)
Import	205	148	113	144	100	96	137	328	329	144
- Tariff	154	112	93	119	85	84	113	261	265	103
- Customs procedures	30	27	17	15	2	3	6	23	21	6
- Tax	5	4	3	6	5	8	8	6	8	2
- QRs	5	1	0	3	1	1	8	33	29	26
- Other	11	4	0	1	7	0	2	5	6	7
Export	40	32	24	18	14	7	14	69	54	38
- Duties	18	5	1	6	10	5	10	14	12	3
- QRs	3	1	2	0	1	1	3	45	39	27
- Other	19	26	21	12	3	1	1	10	3	8
Other	4	3	0	0	1	1	2	1	1	0
Total	249	183	137	162	115	104	153	398	384	182
<i>Average per month</i>	<i>20.8</i>	<i>15.3</i>	<i>11.4</i>	<i>13.5</i>	<i>9.6</i>	<i>8.7</i>	<i>12.8</i>	<i>33.2</i>	<i>32.0</i>	<i>26.0</i>

Note: Revisions of the data reflect changes undertaken in the TMDB to fine-tune and update the available information.

Source: WTO Secretariat.

3.7. The trade coverage of the import-facilitating measures introduced during the review period was estimated at USD 675.0 billion (down from USD 1,038.4 billion in the last report), i.e. 3.1% of the value of world merchandise imports (Table 3.2 and Chart 3.3).

3.8. Based on trade coverage, the HS Chapters within which most of the import-facilitating measures were taken include machinery and mechanical appliances (HS 84) (11.1%), mineral fuels

⁴ This figure also includes measures taken in response to the war in Ukraine and terminations of restrictive measures that were implemented during the review period.

and oils (HS 27) (10.5%), copper and articles thereof (HS 74) (9.1%), and electrical machinery and parts thereof (HS 85) (8.4%).

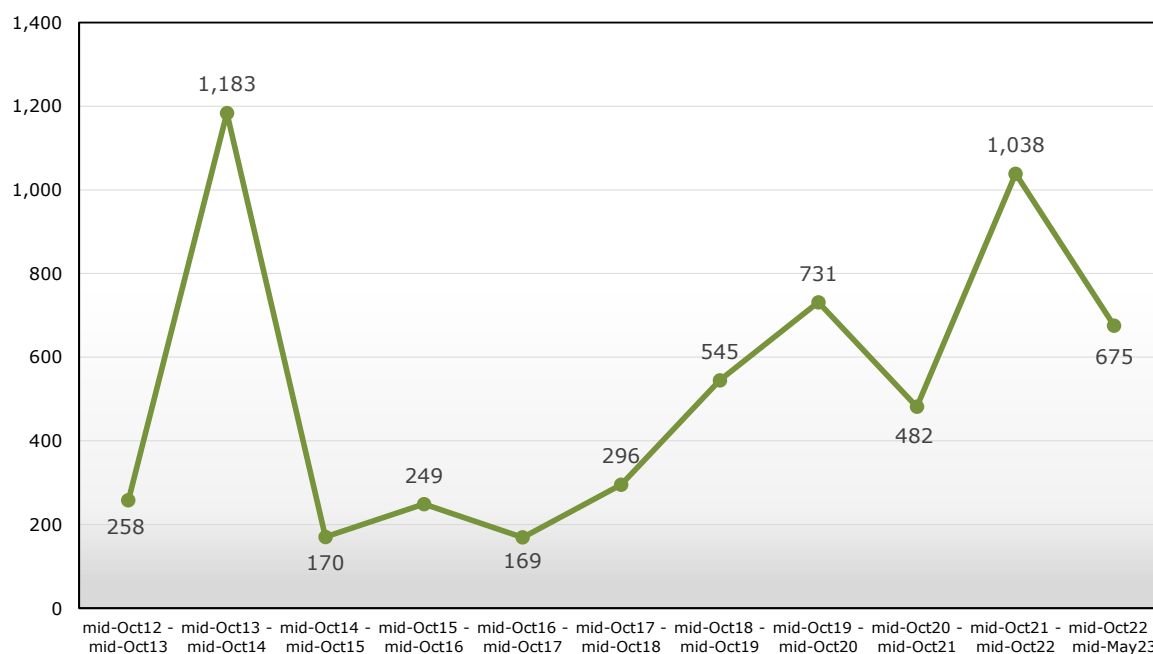
Table 3.2 Share of trade covered by import-facilitating measures, mid-Oct 2014-mid-May 2023

(%)

	Mid-Oct 14 to mid-Oct 15	Mid-Oct 15 to mid-Oct 16	Mid-Oct 16 to mid-Oct 17	Mid-Oct 17 to mid-Oct 18	Mid-Oct 18 to mid-Oct 19	Mid-Oct 19 to mid-Oct 20	Mid-Oct 20 to mid-Oct 21	Mid-Oct 21 to mid-Oct 22	Mid-Oct 22 to mid-May 23
Share in total world imports	0.91	1.51	1.07	1.68	2.80	3.88	2.74	4.72	3.06

Source: WTO Secretariat and UN Comtrade database.

Chart 3.3 Trade coverage of new import-facilitating measures in each reporting period (not cumulative) in USD billion



Note: These figures are estimates and represent the trade coverage of the measures (i.e. annual imports of the products concerned from economies affected by the measures) introduced during each reporting period, and not the cumulative impact of the trade measures.

Source: WTO Secretariat.

3.9. The trade coverage of the export-facilitating measures introduced during the review period was estimated at USD 28.8 billion (down from USD 122.1 billion in last report), i.e. 0.1% of the value of world merchandise exports. The HS Chapters within which most of the export-facilitating measures were taken, in terms of trade coverage, include iron and steel (HS 72) (43.7%), and cereals (HS 10) (29.1%).

3.10. Overall, the trade coverage of the import- and export-facilitating measures introduced during the review period was estimated at USD 703.7 billion (down from USD 1,160.5 billion in the last report).

Trade remedy actions

3.11. During the period under review, 129 trade remedy actions (72 initiations and 57 terminations) were recorded for WTO Members and Observers (Annex 2 of the Addendum), accounting for 30.6% of all trade-related measures covered in this Report. Anti-dumping continued to be the most frequent trade remedy action, accounting for 79.2 % of all initiations and 93.0 % of all terminations.

3.12. After reaching its highest peak so far in 2020 (36.1), the average number of trade remedy initiations during the review period was 10.3 per month, the second lowest since 2012. The monthly average of trade remedy terminations recorded during the review period was 8.1, the lowest since 2012 (Table 3.3 and Chart 3.4).

Table 3.3 Trade remedy actions (Annex 2), 2015-mid-May 2023

Type of measure	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Mid-Oct 21 to mid-Oct 22 (WT/TPR/OV/25)	Mid-Oct 22 to mid-May 23 (7 months)
Initiations	277	343	298	273	281	433	213	112	142	72
- AD	229	298	249	202	215	355	186	89	113	57
- CVD	31	34	41	55	36	56	18	19	23	13
- SG	17	11	8	16	30	22	9	4	6	2
<i>Average per month</i>	23.1	28.6	24.8	22.8	23.4	36.1	17.8	9.3	11.8	10.3
Terminations	212	171	158	225	184	216	302	233	265	57
- AD	167	141	129	201	167	184	258	199	234	53
- CVD	25	15	12	24	7	13	23	23	24	2
- SG ^a	20	15	17	0	10	19	21	11	7	2
<i>Average per month</i>	17.7	14.3	13.2	18.8	15.3	18	25.2	19.4	22.1	8.1

a The figure for a specific year is the sum of the following: (i) all ongoing investigations terminated during the course of that specific year, normally as of late October, without any measure; and (ii) all imposed measures expired during the course of that specific year, normally as of late October.

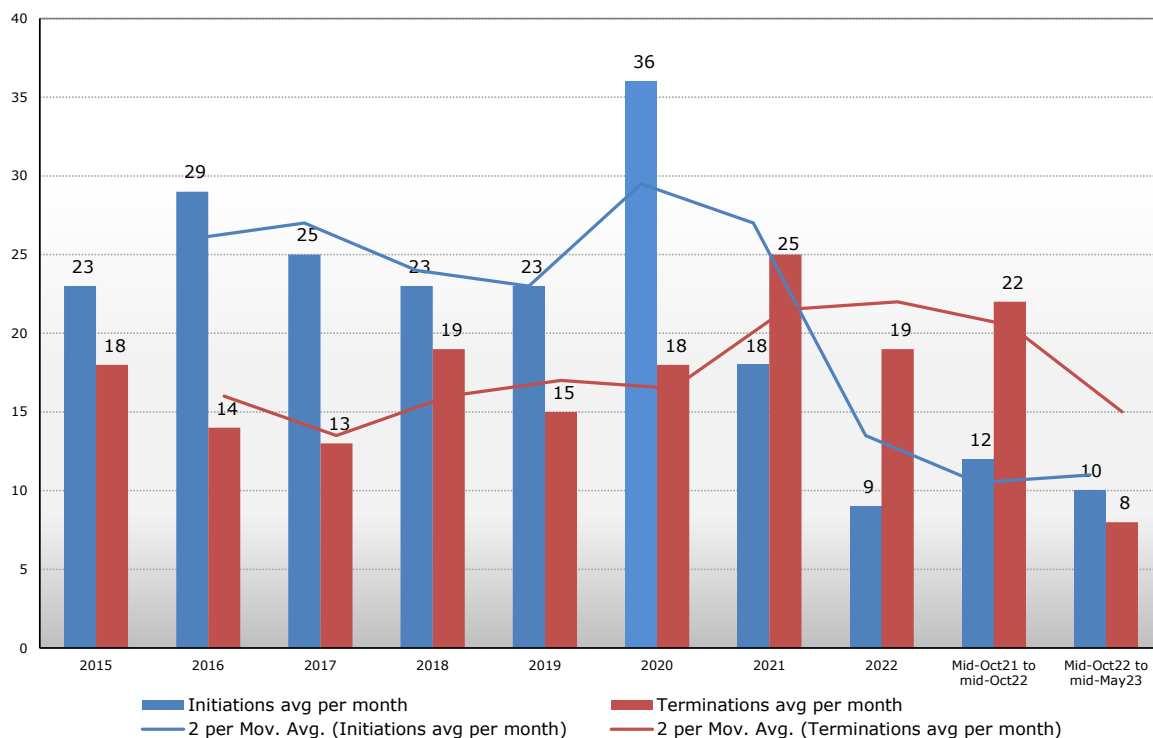
Note: The information on trade remedy actions for 2015 to 2022 is based on the semi-annual notifications. For the present review period, the information is also based on the responses and the verifications received directly from Members. Anti-dumping and countervailing investigations are counted based on the number (*n*) of exporting countries or customs territories affected by an investigation. Thus, one anti-dumping or countervailing investigation involving imports from (*n*) countries/customs territories is counted as (*n*) investigations.

Source: WTO Secretariat.

3.13. Since 2021, a significant decline in the number of initiations of trade remedies has been observed (Table 3.3 and Chart 3.4). This represents an important change in the landscape of trade measures as traditionally trade remedies have represented an overwhelming majority of all measures recorded. There may be several reasons for this recent decline. In the case of both the pandemic and more recently the war in Ukraine, Members have largely focused on making sure that their territories remained well-stocked and accessible for a relatively wide range of products. Such policies may have impacted the use of trade remedies instruments.

3.14. The trade coverage of all trade remedy investigations initiated during the review period was USD 6.6 billion (down from USD 8.3 billion in last report), i.e. 0.03% of the value of world merchandise imports (Table 3.4). For terminations, the trade coverage was valued at USD 9.3 billion (down from USD 14.0 billion in the last report), i.e. 0.04% of the value of world merchandise imports.

3.15. Trade remedy actions taken during the review period, in terms of trade coverage, included initiations of investigations on plastic and articles thereof (HS 39) (37.4%), iron and steel (HS 72) (21.7%), machinery and mechanical appliances (HS 84) (16.9%), and electrical machinery and parts thereof (HS 85) (10.2%).

Chart 3.4 Trade remedies initiations and terminations, average number per month

Note: Values are rounded.

Source: WTO Secretariat.

Table 3.4 Share of trade covered by trade remedy initiations, mid-Oct 2014-mid-May 2023

(%)

	Mid-Oct 14 to mid-Oct 15	Mid-Oct 15 to mid-Oct 16	Mid-Oct 16 to mid-Oct 17	Mid-Oct 17 to mid-Oct 18	Mid-Oct 18 to mid-Oct 19	Mid-Oct 19 to mid-Oct 20	Mid-Oct 20 to mid-Oct 21	Mid-Oct 21 to mid-Oct 22	Mid-Oct 22 to mid-May 23
Share in total world imports	0.17	0.55	0.48	0.53	0.24	0.36	0.15	0.04	0.03

Source: WTO Secretariat and UN Comtrade database.

Other trade and trade-related measures

3.16. Annex 3 of the Addendum to this Report lists measures that may be considered to have a trade-restrictive effect. A total of 110 new trade-restrictive measures were recorded for WTO Members and Observers during the review period. Most of the trade-restrictive measures recorded were export measures. For the third time since the beginning of the Trade Monitoring Exercise the number of new export restrictions (58 or 52.7% of all) outpaced that of import restrictions (52 or 47.3%).

3.17. Export restrictions mainly included the imposition of QRs and increases of export duties. Import restrictions consisted of increases of import tariffs mainly, followed by the imposition of QRs. The average of 15.7 trade-restrictive measures per month is the third highest recorded since 2016 (Table 3.5).

Table 3.5 Other trade and trade-related measures (Annex 3), 2015- mid May 2023

Type of measure	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Mid-Oct 21 to mid-Oct 22 (WT/TPR/OV/25)	Mid-Oct 22 to mid-May 23 (7 months)
Import	166	98	84	114	77	72	75	75	87	52
- Tariff	106	63	47	70	46	40	36	40	52	24
- Customs procedures	32	16	19	6	6	10	21	11	9	14
- Tax	10	6	9	13	6	6	5	0	0	1
- QRs	12	12	7	16	14	10	11	18	20	9
- Other	6	1	2	9	5	6	2	6	6	4
Export	44	20	18	18	19	27	67	139	131	58
- Duties	13	6	4	9	7	4	14	16	16	9
- QRs	7	10	8	4	3	11	27	107	98	39
- Other	24	4	6	5	9	12	26	16	17	10
Other	13	11	14	0	2	0	5	0	0	0
- Local content	13	7	12	0	1	0	4	0	0	0
- Other	0	4	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Total	223	129	116	132	98	99	147	214	218	110
<i>Average per month</i>	<i>18.6</i>	<i>10.8</i>	<i>9.7</i>	<i>11.0</i>	<i>8.2</i>	<i>8.3</i>	<i>12.3</i>	<i>17.8</i>	<i>18.2</i>	<i>15.7</i>

Note: Revised data reflect changes undertaken in the TMDB to fine-tune and update the available information.

Source: WTO Secretariat.

3.18. The trade coverage of the import-restrictive measures implemented during the review period was estimated at USD 64.8 billion (down from USD 163.5 billion in last report), i.e. 0.3% of the value of world merchandise imports (Table 3.6 and Chart 3.5).

Table 3.6 Share of trade covered by import-restrictive measures (Annex 3), mid-Oct 14-mid-May2023

(%)

	Mid-Oct 14 to mid-Oct 15	Mid-Oct 15 to mid-Oct 16	Mid-Oct 16 to mid-Oct 17	Mid-Oct 17 to mid-Oct 18	Mid-Oct 18 to mid-Oct 19	Mid-Oct 19 to mid-Oct 20	Mid-Oct 20 to mid-Oct 21	Mid-Oct 21 to mid-Oct 22	Mid-Oct 22 to mid-May 23
Share in total world imports	1.23	0.62	0.50	3.33	3.84	2.40	0.60	0.74	0.29

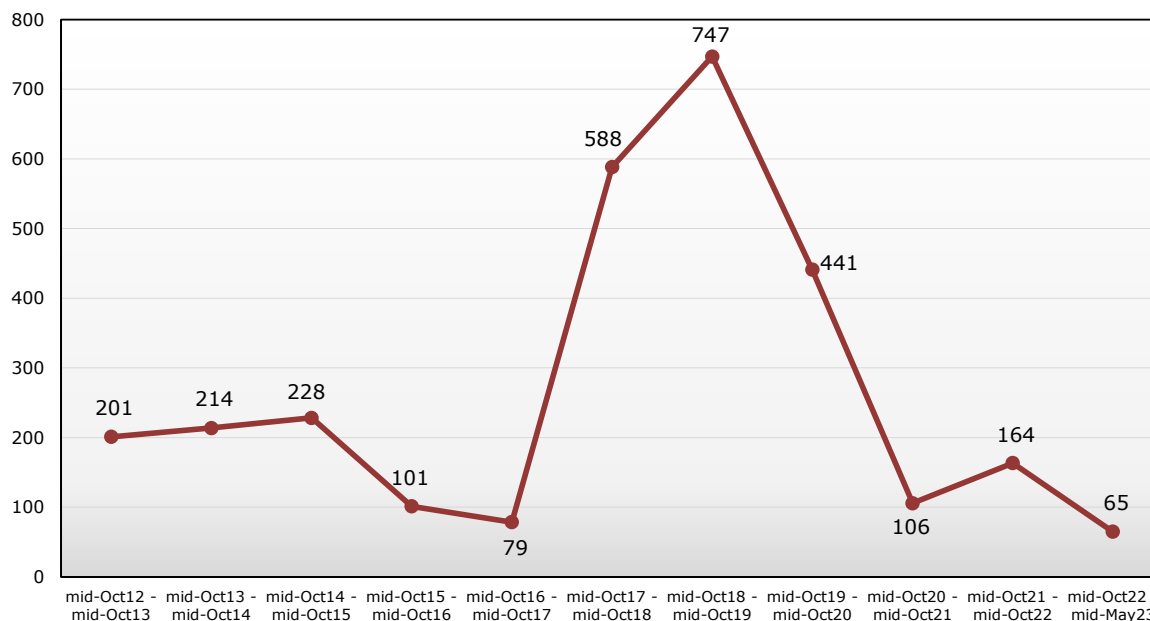
Source: WTO Secretariat and UN Comtrade database.

3.19. The import-restrictive measures recorded during the review period cover a wide range of products. The main sectors affected (HS Chapters), in terms of trade coverage, vehicles, and parts and accessories thereof (HS 87) (22.0%), electrical machinery and parts thereof (HS 85) (16.9%), machinery and mechanical appliances (HS 84) (16.7%), and iron and steel (HS 72) (12.6%).

3.20. The trade coverage of the export-restrictive measures implemented during the review period was estimated at USD 45.7 billion (down from USD 114.5 billion in last report), i.e. 0.2% of the value of world merchandise exports. The export-restrictive measures recorded cover a wide range of products. The main sectors affected (HS Chapters), in terms of trade coverage, were aluminium and articles thereof (HS 76) (29.2%), fertilizers (HS 31) (27.3%), cereals (HS 10) (19.8%), and copper and articles thereof (HS 74) (9.3%).

3.21. Overall, the trade coverage of the import- and export-restrictive measures implemented during the review period was estimated at USD 110.5 billion (down from USD 278.0 billion in the last report).

Chart 3.5 Trade coverage of new import-restrictive measures in each reporting period (not cumulative) in USD billion, mid-May 2012-mid-May 2023



Note: These figures are estimates and represent the trade coverage of the measures (i.e. annual imports of the products concerned from economies affected by the measures) introduced during each reporting period, and not the cumulative impact of the trade measures.

Source: WTO Secretariat.

Stockpile of import-restrictive measures

3.22. Estimating the roll-back of import-restrictive measures, and eventually the overall stockpile, is made complex by the fact that many temporary measures remain in place beyond the envisaged termination date. Moreover, the Secretariat does not always receive accurate information on changes to recorded measures. As a result, the figures below are estimates based on the information recorded in the TMDB since 2009. These estimates are conditioned by the availability of termination dates of the import-restrictive measures and of the HS codes of products covered.⁵

Table 3.7 Cumulative trade coverage of import-restrictive trade-related measures, 2015-22

(USD billion, unless otherwise indicated)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 ^a
Total imports (world)	16,360	15,812	17,587	19,402	18,883	17,625	22,082	25,169
Total import restrictions in force	598	570	814	1,457	1,646	1,516	2,042	2,315
Share in world imports (%)	3.66	3.61	4.63	7.51	8.72	8.60	9.25	9.20
Total import restrictions terminated	1.51	38.09	3.88	5.45	13.12	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Share in world imports (%)	0.01	0.24	0.02	0.03	0.07	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

n.a. Not applicable. In 2022, for two measures the date of termination is 31 December. These will be taken into account as terminated in 2023.

a 2022 figures are provisional.

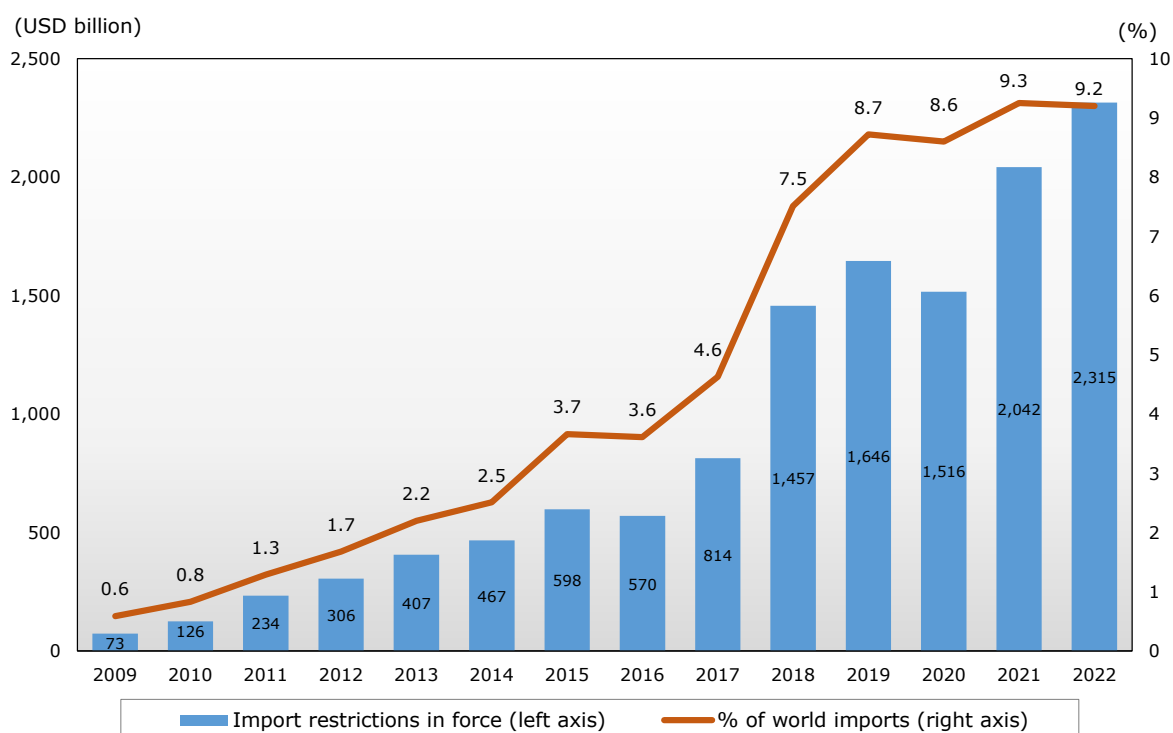
Source: WTO Secretariat calculations, based on UN Comtrade database.

⁵ Only import measures where HS codes were available are included in the calculation.

3.23. Table 3.7 and Chart 3.6 show that the stockpile of import restrictions in force has grown steadily (and in fact since 2009) – in value terms and as a percentage of world imports – and that a significant increase in both took place from 2017 to 2018. This specific jump is largely explained by measures introduced on steel and aluminium, and by various tariff increases introduced as part of bilateral trade tensions. Global imports decreased substantially in 2020 compared to 2019. The decline was also reflected in total imports and in the value of the import restrictions in force. Global trade grew again in 2021, due to rising export and import prices as inflation became a global phenomenon.

3.24. For 2022, the trade covered by import restrictions in force was estimated at USD 2,315 billion, representing 9.2% of world merchandise imports.⁶

Chart 3.6 Cumulative trade coverage of import-restrictive measures on goods since 2009



Note: The cumulative trade coverage estimated by the Secretariat is based on information available in the TMDB on import measures recorded since 2009 and considered to have a trade-restrictive effect. The estimates include import measures for which HS codes were available. The figures do not include trade remedy measures. The import values were sourced by the UN Comtrade database.

Source: WTO Secretariat.

3.25. The following box on export restrictions on critical raw materials has been contributed by the OECD.

Box 3.1 Export restrictions on critical raw materials have increased more than five-fold in the last decade

Given widespread demand and concentrated supply, international trade will play a key role in satisfying the rapidly growing demand for critical raw materials (CRMs), such as rare earth minerals, lithium, cobalt, and nickel, which are essential for renewable energy and digital technologies. This is particularly the case in the short to medium term, as scaling up of new mining capacities and recycling of CRMs take time to operationalize. Indeed, between 2007-09 and 2017-19, the value of trade in CRMs expanded faster than overall merchandise trade, growing at 38% (vs 31% for all merchandise trade). This average also hides significant peaks, with trade in lithium increasing by 438%, and trade in ores and minerals by 57%. Against this background, the growing use of export restrictions on CRMs documented recently by the OECD is cause for concern.

⁶ Tentative figures based on 2022 and 2021 import data and measures recorded up to 15 May 2023.

The annually updated OECD database on export restrictions on raw materials shows that export restrictions on CRMs have seen a five-fold increase since the OECD began collecting data in 2009 (Figure 1), with 10% of global trade in CRMs now facing at least one export restriction measure. Export restrictions on ores and minerals – the raw materials located upstream in CRM supply chains – grew faster than restrictions in the other segments of the CRM supply chain. This correlates with the increasing concentration of upstream production, imports, and exports.

Export taxes were the largest contributor to the increased global stock of export restrictions and became the most frequently used type of restriction in 2020 (Figure 2). This may be related to the fact that, under WTO rules, quantitative restrictions on exports are generally prohibited, while export taxes are not.

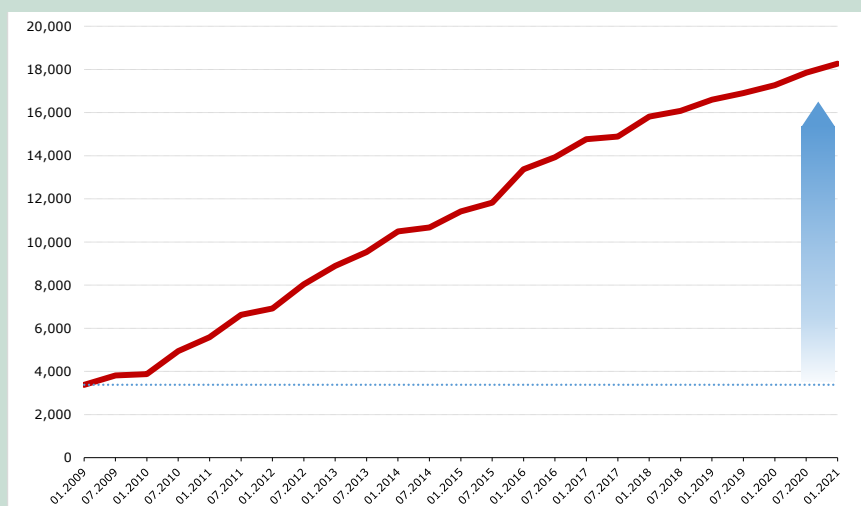
Export restrictions on raw materials undermine the economic viability – and thus decrease output – of domestic extractive industries and benefit domestic downstream users of these materials to the detriment of foreign users. Export taxes or quantitative export restrictions, such as export quotas or even bans, may also contribute to raising world market prices for the CRMs in question, particularly if the exporter holds a large share of the market. Such restrictions also create incentives for other producing countries to introduce similar restrictions, placing even more upward pressure on international prices and in turn increasing incentives to restrict exports. Such spiralling increases in commodity prices have been both a reflection of, and a factor behind, escalating export restrictions on raw materials.

Export restrictions on CRMs may also undermine environmental goals by hindering the production and diffusion of green technologies. Moreover, while some – such as export restrictions on waste and scrap – may be aimed at developing the circular economy, this may not serve global environmental ends if it hinders processing in the most efficient locations or undermines the economies of scale needed to develop circularity.

While the impacts of export restrictions will depend on a range of factors, including other policies (such as [subsidies](#)), the trend towards increasing export restrictions may be playing a role in key international markets, with potentially sizeable effects on both the availability and prices of these materials. To explore cooperative options for alleviating harmful export restrictions, it will be important to continue work to better understand the motivations of the countries using them and the effects they have on trading partners.

Further information on **Raw Materials Critical for the Green Transition: Production, International Trade and Export restrictions**, including access to the OECD Inventory of Export Restrictions on Industrial Raw Materials, is available at: <https://www.oecd.org/trade/topics/trade-in-raw-materials/>.

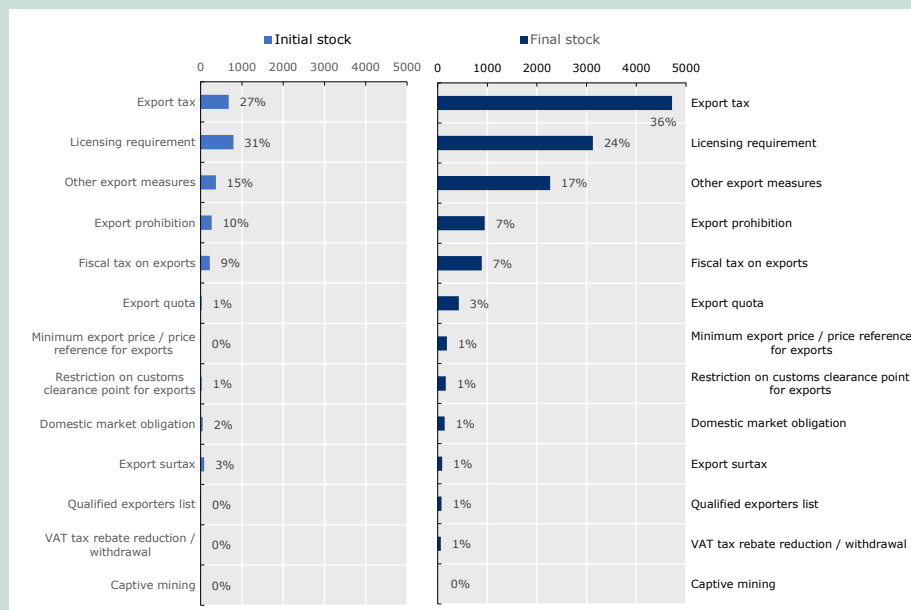
Figure 1 Count of export restrictions on industrial raw materials



Source: OECD Database on Industrial Raw Materials.

Figure 2 Initial and current incidence of export restrictions by type of measure

(Initial incidence (2009) of export restrictions by imposing country, increase factor and current stock)



Source: OECD.

3.1.2 COVID-19 trade and trade-related measures

3.26. During the review period, 17 COVID-19 measures on goods – mostly facilitating measures – were communicated by 36 Members⁷ and 1 Observer.⁸ Most of these measures were new measures (12) with several (7) being implemented during the review period. Out of the 17 pandemic-related measures, 10 targeted imports (58.8%), 6 were export measures (35.2%) and 1 was a more general measure. Most of these pandemic-related measures (10 out of 17) were temporary in nature and either have been already terminated or will be phased out.

3.27. Overall, since the outbreak of the pandemic, 454 trade and trade-related measures in the area of goods have been implemented by WTO Members and Observers (Table 3.8)⁹, of which 251 (55.3%) were of a trade-facilitating nature and 203 (44.7%) were trade-restrictive.

3.28. During the review period, Members continued to phase out pandemic-related measures, and in particular restrictive ones. According to information received by the Secretariat, as of mid-May 2023, 130 (51.8%) of the COVID-19 trade-facilitating and 170 (83.7%) of the trade-restrictive measures have been repealed.

Table 3.8 Number of COVID-19 trade and trade-related measures since the outbreak of the pandemic

	Facilitating	Phased out	Restrictive	Phased out	Total
Import	207	112	20	11	227
Export	28	12	174	152	202
Other	16	6	9	7	25
Total	251	130	203	170	454

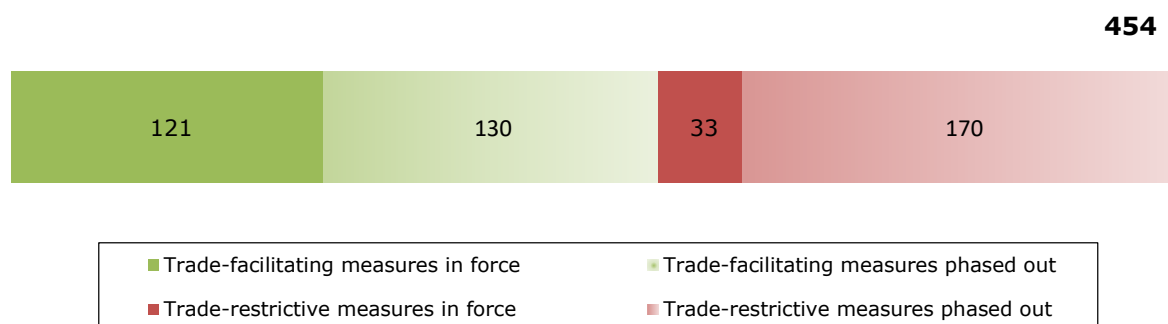
Note: Revised data reflect changes to fine-tune and update available information.

Source: WTO Secretariat.

⁷ Australia, Brazil, Costa Rica, European Union (EU27 and its member States are counted separately), India, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Türkiye.

⁸ Azerbaijan.

⁹ Measures implemented in the context of the pandemic up can be viewed at: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/covid19_e/covid19_e.htm.

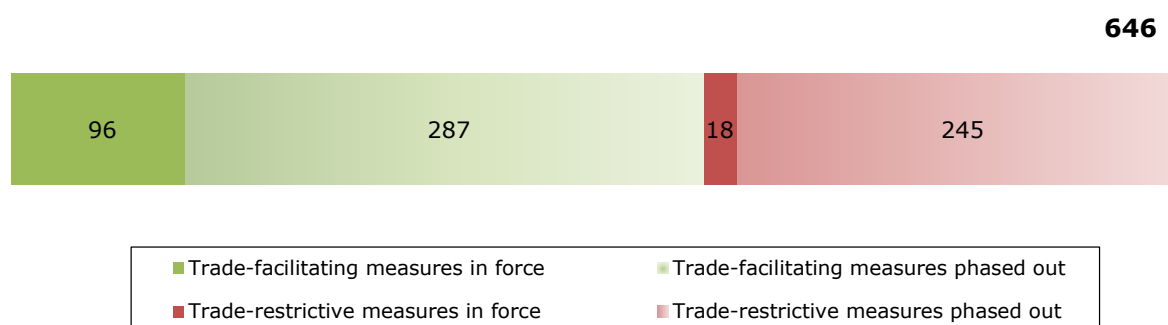
Chart 3.7 Number of COVID-19 trade and trade-related measures on goods, by mid-May 2023

Source: WTO Secretariat.

3.29. About 82.5% of the trade-facilitating measures taken since the beginning of the pandemic were import measures aiming to reduce or eliminate import tariffs and import taxes. Certain WTO Members and Observers reduced their import tariffs on a variety of goods such as personal protective equipment (PPE), sanitizers, disinfectants, medical equipment, and medicine/drugs. In many cases, tariff reductions were also accompanied by exemptions from VAT and other taxes. Extensions, often more than once, of some measures were implemented, while other measures have simply remained in force.

3.30. Most of the COVID-19 trade-restrictive measures (about 85.7%) were export-related. These measures came in the form of temporary export bans or prohibitions, export licence requirements or export authorization mechanisms targeting a variety of goods such as PPEs, drugs, vaccines, diagnostics, medical supplies and products, and certain food products. The roll-back of these export restrictions taken in the early stages of the pandemic continued during the review period. As of mid-May 2023, 21 COVID-19-related export restrictions were still in place.

3.31. The trade coverage of the COVID-19 trade-facilitating measures implemented since the outbreak of the pandemic was estimated to amount to USD 383.0 billion, and that of trade-restrictive to USD 263.0 billion.¹⁰ Members and Observers have continued phasing out the measures implemented in response to the pandemic. The trade coverage of the COVID-19 trade-restrictive measures repealed since the beginning of the pandemic was estimated at USD 245.0 billion and that of trade-facilitating measures at USD 287.0 billion (Chart 3.8).

Chart 3.8 Trade coverage of COVID-19 trade and trade-related measures on goods, by mid-May 2023 in USD billion

Note: Values are rounded.

Source: WTO Secretariat.

¹⁰ Including imports and exports and based on annual 2021 trade figures.

3.1.3 Developments in the context of the war in Ukraine and the food crisis

3.32. The war in Ukraine has continued to impact the global economy negatively, particularly trade in agricultural products, but also with ramifications spreading to multiple other sectors and resulting in upward pressure on prices. During the review period, WTO Members and Observers extended existing and introduced new measures affecting the export and import of food, feed, and fertilizers. As opposed to measures introduced in the first months of the war in Ukraine, measures introduced in this review period could not always and unambiguously be directly linked to the war. More frequently, measures were introduced in response to the ongoing food crisis, decreased agricultural yields, rising energy costs and inflation. All measures identified were submitted to the relevant delegations for verification.

Export restrictions on food, feed, and fertilizers

3.33. Since the outbreak of the war in late February 2022, the WTO Secretariat has identified 101 export-restrictive measures introduced by 30 WTO Members and 6 Observers¹¹ on agricultural commodities, of which 93 applied to food and feed (92%) and 8 targeted fertilizer exports (8%). As of mid-May 2023, 38 of all identified export restrictions had been rolled back, bringing the number of restrictions in force to 63.¹²

3.34. Since 24 February 2022, the trade coverage of the export-restrictive measures introduced by all WTO Members and Observers was estimated at USD 121.4 billion, of which USD 13.1 billion referred to fertilizers. The trade coverage of the repealed export restrictions has been estimated at USD 96.9 billion, of which USD 7.9 billion on fertilizers. Thus, the trade coverage of export restrictions that are still in place was estimated at USD 24.5 billion.

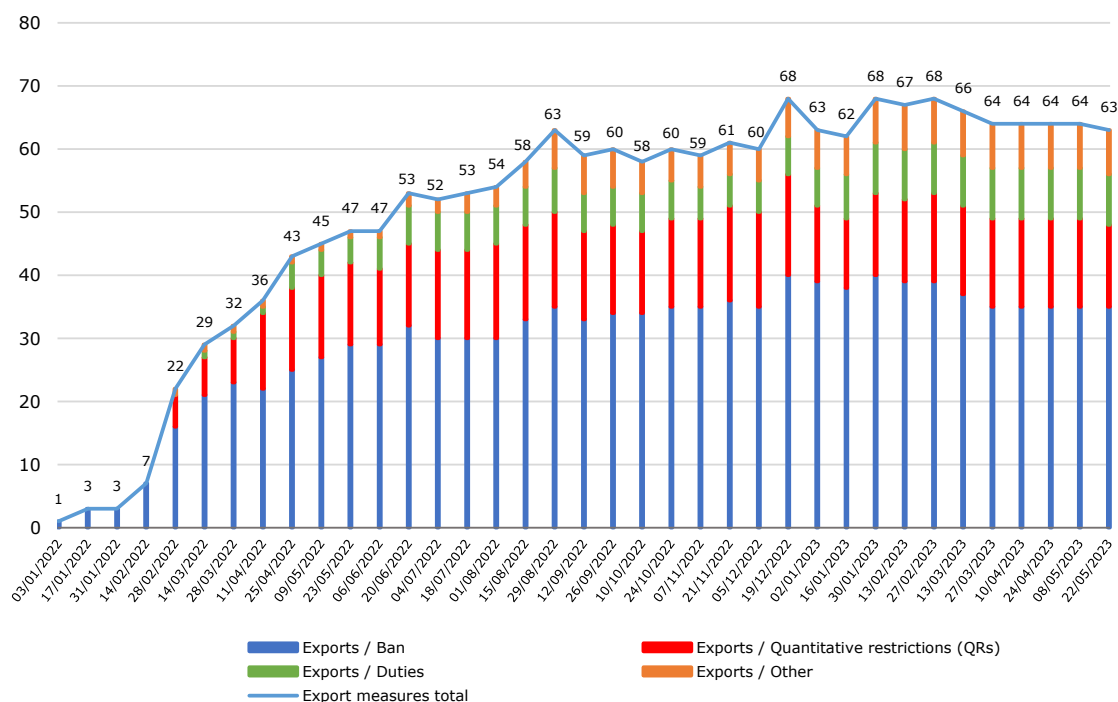
3.35. During the review period, export restrictions targeted a wide range of agricultural products. However, the beginning of 2023 saw a rise of export restrictions on onion, garlic, and other root vegetables, particularly in the Central Asian region to respond to extreme climate events and reduced output. Wheat and other grains remained the most common products falling under export restrictions during the review period.

3.36. The nature of export restrictions remained diverse and included export bans, quotas, duties, licensing requirements and other restrictions (Chart 3.9).

¹¹ Afghanistan, Algeria (Observer), Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan (Observer), Bangladesh, Belarus (Observer), Plurinational State of Bolivia, Burkina Faso, China, Egypt, Georgia, Ghana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, State of Kuwait, Kyrgyz Republic, Lebanon (Observer), Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Republic of Moldova, Morocco, North Macedonia, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Serbia (Observer), Tajikistan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan (Observer).

¹² Implemented by 27 Members and 6 Observers: Afghanistan, Algeria (Observer), Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan (Observer), Bangladesh, Belarus (Observer), Plurinational State of Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Georgia, Ghana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, State of Kuwait, Kyrgyz Republic, Lebanon (Observer), Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Serbia (Observer), Tajikistan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine and Uzbekistan (Observer).

Chart 3.9 Number of export restrictions on food, feed, and fertilizers in force, January 2022-mid-May 2023



Source: WTO Secretariat.

Import-facilitating measures on food, feed, and fertilizers

3.37. Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, the WTO Secretariat has also identified several import-facilitating measures on food, feed, and fertilizers. As of mid-May 2023, 92 import-facilitating measures on various agricultural products were recorded for 64 Members and 3 Observers.¹³ During the reporting period, 38 new import-facilitating measures were implemented. Out of all identified import-facilitating measures, 25 had been phased out or expired by mid-May 2023. Currently, 67 import-facilitating measures remain in place.¹⁴

3.38. Since 24 February 2022, the trade coverage of all import-facilitating measures introduced was estimated at USD 110.0 billion, out of which USD 13.8 billion referred to fertilizers. The trade coverage of terminated import-facilitating measures was estimated at USD 34.0 billion, out of which USD 0.6 billion referred to fertilizers. Therefore, the trade coverage of import-facilitating measures on food, feed and fertilizers that are still in place was estimated at USD 76.0 billion.

3.39. Import-facilitating measures targeted a wide range of agricultural products, including vegetable oils, cereals, rice, meats, and poultry as well as fertilizers. These measures came in the form of reduction of import tariffs, increases of import quotas and introduction of tariff free quotas. Other measures include exemptions from value added taxes and the lifting of import permit requirements (Chart 3.10).

¹³ Azerbaijan (Observer), Armenia, Argentina, Bangladesh, Belarus (Observer), Brazil, Botswana, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Eswatini, European Union (EU-27 and its member States are counted separately), Guatemala, India, Iraq (Observer), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Lesotho, Liberia, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Russian Federation, South Africa, Switzerland, Chinese Taipei, Türkiye, Ukraine, and Viet Nam.

¹⁴ Implemented by 63 Members and 3 Observers: Azerbaijan (Observer), Armenia, Argentina, Bangladesh, Belarus (Observer), Brazil, Botswana, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Egypt, El Salvador, Eswatini, European Union (EU 27 and its member States are counted separately), Guatemala, India, Iraq (Observer), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Lesotho, Liberia, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Russian Federation, South Africa, Switzerland, Chinese Taipei, Türkiye, Ukraine, and Viet Nam.

Chart 3.10 Number of import-facilitating measures on food, feed, and fertilizers in force, January 2022-mid-May 2023



Source: WTO Secretariat.

Import-restrictive measures on food, feed, and fertilizers

3.40. During the reporting period, several measures restricting imports of a number of agricultural products, including wheat, were identified. In contrast to the previous reporting period, when WTO Members and Observers mainly focused on facilitating import of agricultural commodities to reduce price increases and stabilize domestic supply, some of the current import restrictions appear to be designed to prevent excess supply of imported agricultural commodities and to protect domestic producers of these products.

3.41. At the end of February 2023, the WTO Secretariat took stock of developments in the context of the war in Ukraine. Box 3.2 below provides the main conclusions and takeaways identified in two Secretariat papers.

Box 3.2 Taking stock on the one-year anniversary of the war in Ukraine

In late February-early March 2023, two WTO Secretariat papers marked the first anniversary of the war in Ukraine by taking stock of the war's impact on international trade and trade policy. Secretariat research papers do not represent the positions or opinions of the WTO and its Members and are without prejudice to Members' rights and obligations under the WTO.

The first note titled **"One year of war in Ukraine: Assessing the impact on global trade and development"**^a was released by the Economic Research and Statistics Division. It notes that despite the trade-distorting effect of the war in Ukraine, and previously the COVID-19 pandemic, the multilateral trading system has withstood this disruption relatively well. According to the note, global trade continued to increase in 2022, including for products greatly affected by the war, highlighting the resilience of the multilateral trading system.

The positive trade performance of countries dependent on imports from the conflict region was facilitated by their ability to switch their import supply to unaffected economies. For example, Ethiopia, which used to rely on Ukraine and the Russian Federation for 45% of its wheat imports, reacted to the loss of most supplies from these two countries by increasing purchases from other producers.

According to the note, prices rose for goods most affected by the war, but by less than expected at the beginning of the war. Among these products, prices increased between 4.4% for palladium – a key input in the production of catalytic converters in the automotive sector – and 24.2% for maize. While these price increases are substantial, they remain significantly lower than the gloomiest predictions. Simulations run by WTO economists in a scenario of cascading export restrictions on food suggested that wheat prices could increase by up to 85% in some low-income regions. However, the actual increase was 17%.

The WTO Trade Monitoring Update on **"A year of turbulence on food and fertilizers markets"**^b further explored the fluidity of trade-restrictive measures initiated since the beginning of the war in Ukraine. According to the note, irrespective of existing export restrictions on food, feed, and fertilizers prior to the outbreak of the war, a noticeable spike took place after 24 February 2022. It points out that immediately following the outbreak of the war, several export restrictions on wheat, barley, sugar and seeds from Ukraine and the Russian Federation were implemented. The fear of severe domestic shortages of basic foodstuffs appeared to have pushed other countries to also introduce export restrictions on these products or their close substitutes.

The note indicates that the nature of export restrictions became more diversified over time. While the first few months of the war saw authorities resorting to export bans and export quotas, later when global food and fertilizer markets began to stabilize, recourse to less restrictive measures increased. Thus, export restrictions started to include licensing requirements and duties. Furthermore, the note observes that while the initial implementation of export restrictions was often directly attributed to the war, subsequent measures were introduced with reference to the need to ensure domestic supply and to contain inflationary pressures. Therefore, it appears that with time the initial direct linkage between the war and the implementation of export restrictions became less obvious.

Furthermore, the note points out that during the first three months following the outbreak of the war, new export restrictions mainly targeted a relatively limited range of agricultural products, including various grains, sugar, vegetable oils and fertilizers. Later, the scope of export restrictions expanded to a much wider range to include rice, poultry and poultry products (eggs), meat, dairy products, fruits, and vegetables.

The note concludes that ensuring transparency and proportionality in the context of the implementation of export restrictions, especially in times of crisis, is imperative to provide predictability and reduce uncertainty in international markets.

a Available at: https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/oneyukr_e.pdf.

b Available at: https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news23_e/trdev_02mar23_e.pdf.

Source: WTO Secretariat.

3.42. In the weeks and months following the start of the war in Ukraine, numerous sanctions were imposed on the Russian Federation as well as on Belarus. Several countermeasures were also implemented by the Russian Federation and Belarus in response to these sanctions. The overwhelming majority of these measures were not specifically trade-related, and applied to the financial, military, civil aviation, and energy sectors, as well as to specific entities and individuals. Most of these sanctions were generally announced and implemented with reference to security considerations.

3.43. In recent meetings of the TPRB to discuss the Director-General's Trade Monitoring Reports, delegations have stressed their right to implement sanctions as part of commercial policy, often with reference to the essential security interests listed in Article XXI(a) and (b) of the GATT 1994.

3.2 Trade remedies¹⁵

3.44. WTO Members initiated 112 trade remedies investigations (i.e. anti-dumping, countervailing duty, and safeguards investigations) in 2022, a drop of nearly 47% from the 213 initiations in 2021. Following a significant increase in 2021, the total number of trade remedy measures applied by Members in 2022 (123) fell below the average total number of measures between 2008-22 (185).

3.45. Anti-dumping actions are the most numerous among trade remedy initiations and measures applied. Since 2020, most anti-dumping actions have targeted products in the metals, chemicals and plastics, and rubber sectors. Metals and chemical products accounted for the largest share of countervailing initiations.

3.46. Safeguard measures are subject to different rules and timelines compared to anti-dumping and countervailing actions, as they apply to all exporting countries/customs territories. In 2022, initiations of safeguard investigations also dropped significantly compared to previous years.

Anti-dumping measures¹⁶

3.47. The total number of anti-dumping initiations decreased by 75% between 2020 and 2022 (Table 3.9). While anti-dumping investigations do not necessarily lead to the imposition of measures, a decrease in the number of investigations initiated is an early indicator of a likely decrease in the number of measures imposed. Between 2020 and 2022, a total of 497 anti-dumping measures were applied. As it can take up to 18 months for an anti-dumping investigation to be concluded, the measures applied in each period may not necessarily be the result of investigations initiated in the same period.

Table 3.9 Number of initiations of anti-dumping investigations and measures applied, by Member, 2020-22

Reporting Member	2020		2021		2022	
	Initiations	Measures	Initiations	Measures	Initiations	Measures
Argentina	6	11	15	10	9	10
Australia	18	0	6	8	3	1
Bahrain, Kingdom of; Kuwait, State of; Oman; Qatar; Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of; United Arab Emirates ^a	1	2	12	1	0	0
Brazil	9	0	11	6	0	5
Canada	24	5	6	20	2	4
Chile	2	0	0	0	0	0
China	4	9	0	22	2	2
Colombia	4	0	0	3	0	0
Egypt	10	2	0	11	1	1
European Union ^b	12	8	11	11	3	8
Ghana	0	1	0	0	0	0
India	92	12	30	49	29	7
Indonesia	2	0	0	0	0	2
Japan	1	1	2	1	0	2
Korea, Republic of	3	1	7	3	5	3
Malaysia	11	6	1	3	0	0

¹⁵ This Section is without prejudice to Members' right to take trade remedy actions under the WTO.

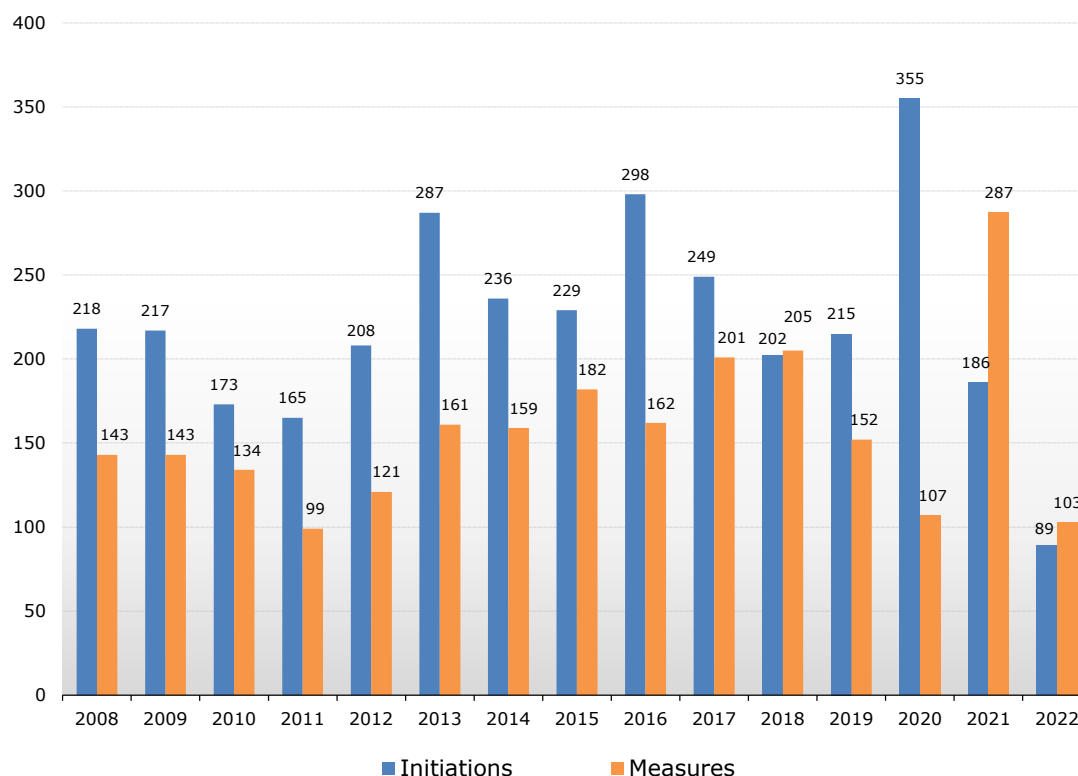
¹⁶ Anti-dumping and countervailing investigations are counted based on the number (*n*) of exporting countries or customs territories affected by an investigation. Thus, one anti-dumping or countervailing investigation involving imports from *n* countries/customs territories is counted as *n* investigations.

Reporting Member	2020		2021		2022	
	Initiations	Measures	Initiations	Measures	Initiations	Measures
Mexico	7	4	4	6	4	1
Morocco	3	0	0	1	1	2
New Zealand	4	0	2	1	1	1
Pakistan	3	4	9	7	1	10
Paraguay	0	0	0	0	1	0
Peru	3	0	0	2	1	0
Philippines	0	0	1	0	0	0
Russian Federation ^c	4	2	2	5	0	2
South Africa ^d	4	3	13	0	3	10
Chinese Taipei	5	0	0	5	3	0
Thailand	13	1	3	12	0	5
Türkiye	3	2	9	1	0	7
Ukraine	6	6	12	8	0	0
United Kingdom ^{e,f}	0	0	1	0	1	1
United States	89	21	24	82	19	15
Uruguay	1	0	0	0	0	1
Viet Nam	11	6	5	9	0	3
Total	355	107	186	287	89	103

- a Notified by all Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member States collectively, as investigations are initiated by the GCC regional investigating authority on behalf of all GCC member States.
- b The European Union is counted as one (28 member States until 31 January 2020, 27 member States thereafter).
- c Notified by the Russian Federation, but investigations are initiated by the Eurasian Economic Union on behalf of all of its members, i.e. Armenia, Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, and Belarus (non-WTO Member) collectively.
- d Notified by South Africa, but investigations are initiated at the level of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) on behalf of its member States (also for Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho and Namibia).
- e The United Kingdom withdrew from the European Union as of 1 February 2020. The European Union and the United Kingdom communicated that during the transition period, which ended on 31 December 2020, European Union law, with a few limited exceptions, continued to be applicable to and in the United Kingdom. See WTO documents WT/LET/1462, 29 January 2020; and WT/GC/206, 1 February 2020.
- f Member State of the European Union until 1 February 2020.

Source: WTO Secretariat.

3.48. The number of initiations of anti-dumping investigations increased significantly in 2020 compared with the previous years (Chart 3.11). The 355 initiations in 2020 represent the peak since 2002 but is lower than the all-time high of 372 seen in 2001. The increase in the initiations in 2020 also led to an increase in total number of measures applied in 2021.

Chart 3.11 Number of initiations of anti-dumping investigations and measures applied, 2008-22

Source: WTO Secretariat.

3.49. There was little change in terms of the products affected by anti-dumping investigations initiated between 2020 and 2022, with most initiations targeting products in the metals, chemicals, and plastics, and rubber sectors.

3.50. During the review period, the Committee on Anti-Dumping Practices held two meetings, on 26 October 2022 and 3 May 2023¹⁷, where 40 trade concerns were raised with respect to anti-dumping practices. Most of these concerns (70%) were raised on AD actions by China (6), the European Union (4), the Republic of Korea (3), Viet Nam (3), Egypt (2), India (2), Morocco (2), South Africa (2), Ukraine (2) and the United States (3). The remaining trade concerns were raised on AD actions by Australia (1), Brazil (1), Canada (1), EAEU member States (Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, and the Russian Federation) (1), Egypt (1), Israel (1), Malaysia (1), the Philippines (1), Chinese Taipei (1), Thailand (1), and the United Kingdom (1).

3.51. Other additional issues and concerns were raised with respect to (i) the continued application of anti-dumping measures resulting from sunset reviews; (ii) the length of US anti-dumping measures – prolonged measures; (iii) sunset reviews conducted by the European Union leading to the continued imposition of prolonged anti-dumping measures; (iv) the European Union's Regulation (EU) 2017/2321 and Regulation (EU) 2018/825; (v) the United States' non-market economy (NME) treatment of certain countries in anti-dumping investigations; (vi) the NME methodology in anti-dumping investigations; (vii) the importance of prompt notifications for transparency purposes; (viii) the transitional reviews, continued application by the United Kingdom of the European Union's anti-dumping measures conducted after Brexit and lengthy transitional reviews; (ix) the anti-circumvention inquiries frequently initiated in recent years by the U.S. Department of Commerce; (x) the negative effects of the geopolitical situation on the Ukrainian economy, its infrastructure, vital production facilities, capacities, cost of production, production, export potential and the ability of the interested parties to defend their interests in anti-dumping investigations; and (xi) the United States' sunset reviews attributing single country rates.

¹⁷ WTO documents G/ADP/M/62, 18 January 2023 and G/ADP/M/63 (forthcoming), respectively.

Countervailing measures

3.52. While the overall number of initiations of countervailing duty (CVD) investigations has decreased significantly since 2020, the number of countervailing measures fluctuated over the review period (Table 3.10). As with anti-dumping, CVD investigations do not necessarily lead to measures being applied. However, it can be concluded that the high number of initiations in 2020 caused a significant increase in the number of measures applied in 2021.

Table 3.10 Number of initiations of countervailing investigations and measures applied, by Member, 2020-22

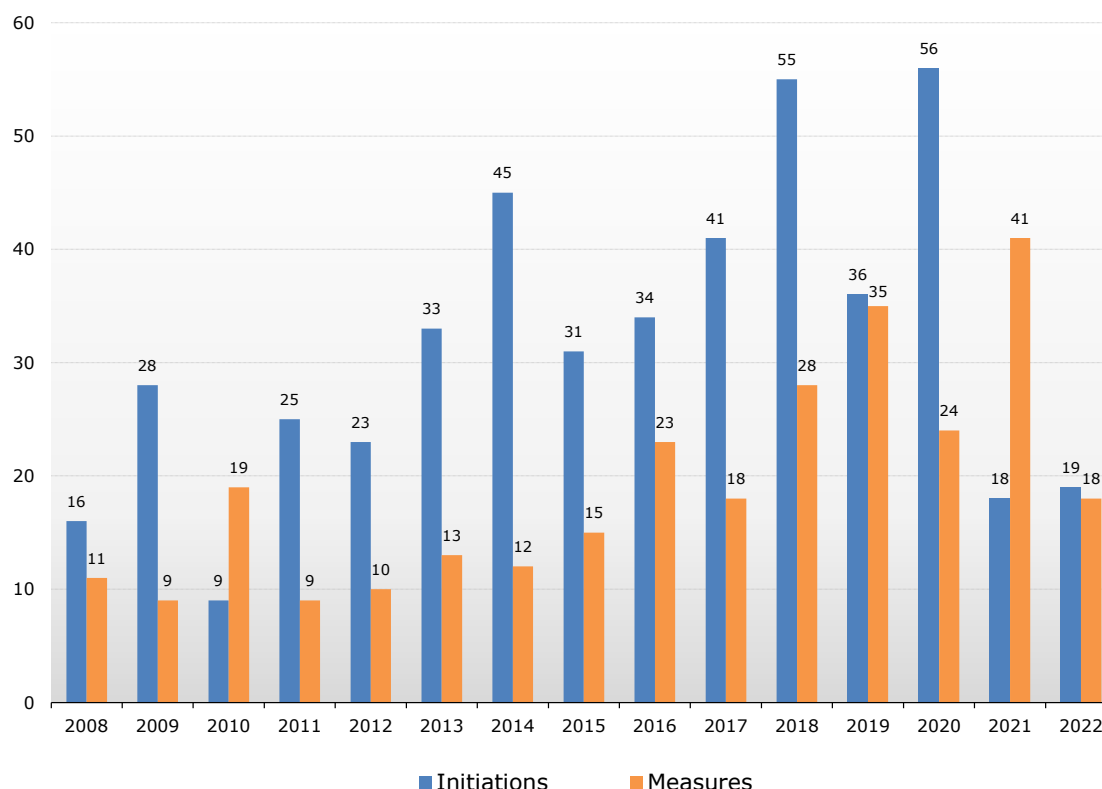
Reporting Member	2020		2021		2022	
	Initiations	Measures	Initiations	Measures	Initiations	Measures
Australia	7	0	1	2	0	0
Brazil	0	0	2	0	0	2
Canada	4	1	1	4	2	2
China	4	2	0	1	0	0
Colombia	0	1	0	0	0	0
European Union ^a	3	3	3	1	1	3
India	7	4	0	2	3	3
United Kingdom ^{b,c}	0	0	0	0	2	0
United States	30	13	11	30	11	8
Viet Nam	1	0	0	1	0	0
Total	56	24	18	41	19	18

a The European Union is counted as one (28 member States until 31 January 2020).

b The United Kingdom withdrew from the European Union as of 1 February 2020. The European Union and the United Kingdom communicated that during the transition period, which ended on 31 December 2020, European Union law, with a few limited exceptions, continued to be applicable to and in the United Kingdom. See WTO documents WT/LET/1462, 29 January 2020; and WT/GC/206, 1 February 2020.

c Member State of the European Union until 1 February 2020.

Source: WTO Secretariat.

Chart 3.12 Number of initiations of countervailing investigations and measures applied, 2008-22

Source: WTO Secretariat.

3.53. Chart 3.12 reflects annual figures on initiations of CVD investigations and measures applied between 2008 and 2022. It shows an upward trend in countervailing initiations from 2015 to 2020, notwithstanding some fluctuation in 2019. Following its peak in 2020, the number of CVD initiations subsequently decreased significantly. Metals and chemical products accounted for the largest share of the initiations reported over the review period.

3.54. At the regular meetings of the Committee on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures on 25 October 2022 and 2 May 2023¹⁸, 11 trade concerns were raised with respect to countervailing duty actions by Brazil (1), China (1), the European Union (3), India (2), the United States (3) and Viet Nam (1).

3.55. Additional concerns were raised with respect to (i) the elimination of export subsidies by Members that received extensions under Article 27.4 of the SCM Agreement; (ii) the low and declining level of compliance with the notification and transparency obligations in the SCM Agreement; (iii) the requests for information pursuant to Articles 25.8 and 25.9 (proposal on procedures from the United States); (iv) the request for information on allegedly discriminatory subsidies policies and measures of the United States; (v) subsidies and overcapacity; (vi) the use of adverse facts available by the United States in various CVD investigations; (vii) the CVD investigations by the European Union regarding the so-called transnational subsidies; (viii) the subsidy transparency and China's publication and inquiry point obligations under China's protocol of accession; (ix) the proposed amendment to procedures for review of new and full subsidy notifications; and (x) the European Union Foreign Subsidies Regulation.

Safeguard measures

3.56. Safeguard measures are temporary measures applied in response to increased imports of goods that are causing serious injury, and are applied on products from all sources, i.e. all exporting

¹⁸ WTO documents G/SCM/M/121, 2 February 2023 and G/SCM/M/123 (forthcoming), respectively.

countries/customs territories.¹⁹ Safeguard measures are subject to different rules and timelines than anti-dumping and countervailing measures and are, therefore, not directly comparable to these other types of trade remedies.

Table 3.11 Number of initiations of safeguard investigations and measures applied, by Member, 2022-22

Reporting Member	2020		2021		2022	
	Initiations	Measures	Initiations	Measures	Initiations	Measures
Bahrain, Kingdom of; Kuwait, State of; Oman; Qatar; Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of; United Arab Emirates ^a	0	0	0	0	0	0
Canada	0	0	0	0	0	0
Colombia	0	0	0	0	0	0
Costa Rica	0	1	0	0	0	0
Ecuador	0	0	0	0	0	0
Egypt	1	0	0	1	0	0
European Union ^b	0	0	0	0	0	0
Guatemala	0	0	0	0	0	0
India	0	0	0	0	1	0
Indonesia	4	5	0	4	0	0
Jordan	0	0	0	0	0	0
Madagascar	0	1	0	0	1	0
Malaysia	1	0	0	0	0	0
Morocco	0	2	1	0	1	0
Panama	0	0	0	0	0	0
Peru	1	0	1	0	0	0
Philippines	5	0	0	0	0	1
Russian Federation ^c	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Africa ^d	2	1	0	1	0	0
Thailand	1	0	0	0	0	0
Tunisia	0	0	1	0	1	0
Türkiye	2	1	1	1	0	1
Ukraine	4	1	5	2	0	0
United Kingdom ^e	NA1	NA1	0	0	0	0
United States	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total	22	12	9	9	4	2

a Notified by all GCC member States collectively as investigations are initiated by the GCC regional investigating authority on behalf of all GCC member States.

b The European Union is counted as one (28 member States until 31 January 2020, 27 member States thereafter).

c Notified by the Russian Federation, but investigations are initiated by the Eurasian Economic Union on behalf of all of its members, i.e. Armenia, Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan (which became a WTO Member on 30 November 2015), and Belarus (non-WTO Member) collectively.

d Notified by South Africa, but investigations are initiated at the level of the Southern African Customs Union, i.e. also in respect of Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, and Namibia.

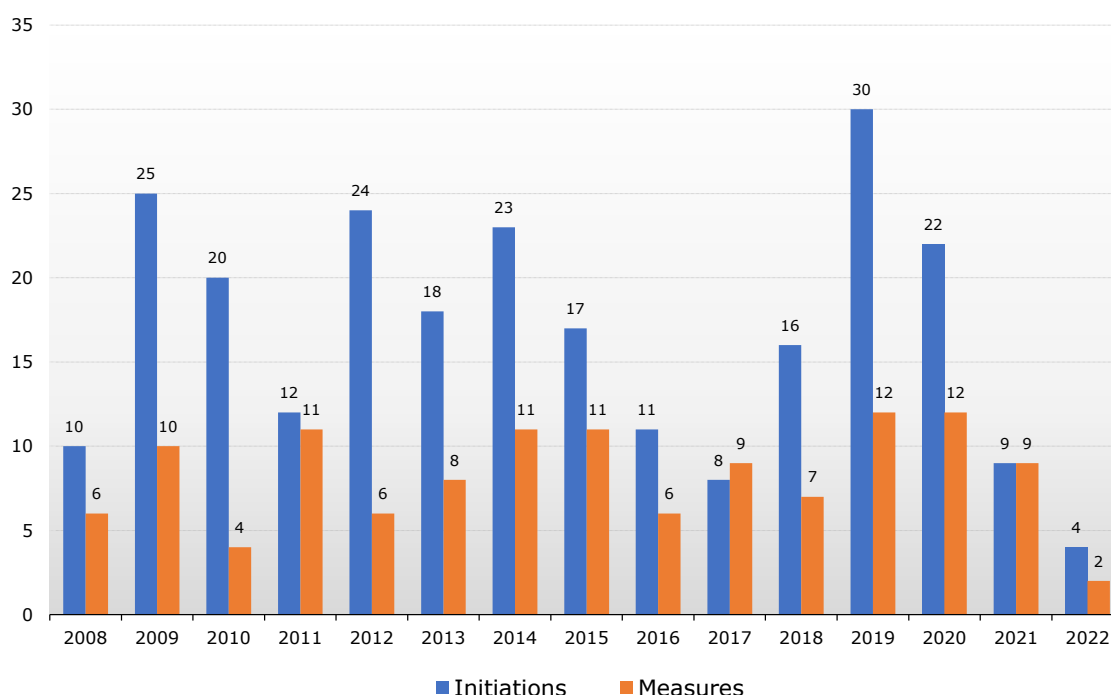
¹⁹ Except for exporting Members covered by the special and differential treatment provided for developing country Members in Article 9.1 of the Agreement on Safeguards.

- e The United Kingdom withdrew from the European Union as of 1 February 2020. The European Union and the United Kingdom communicated that during the transition period, which ended on 31 December 2020, European Union law, with a few limited exceptions, continued to be applicable to and in the United Kingdom. See WTO documents WT/LET/1462, 29 January 2020; and WT/GC/206, 1 February 2020.
- f Member State of the European Union until 1 February 2020.

Source: WTO Secretariat.

3.57. In 2022, there were four safeguard investigations initiated and two measures applied (Table 3.11). This is a significant decrease compared to previous years, especially in terms of initiations. The initiation figure stood at 30 in 2019, which was the second highest since 1995. Since then, a decline to the current level has been observed.

Chart 3.13 Number of initiations of safeguard investigations and measures applied, 2008-22



Source: WTO Secretariat.

3.58. At the regular meetings of the Committee on Safeguards on 24 October 2022 and 1 May 2023²⁰, 18 concerns were raised on safeguard investigations by Costa Rica (1), the European Union (1), India (2), Indonesia (3), Madagascar (3), Morocco (2), the Philippines (1), Tunisia (1), Türkiye (1), the United Kingdom (1), the United States (1) and Viet Nam (1).

3.3 Sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures²¹

3.59. This Section covers SPS transparency-related matters, including specific trade concerns (STCs) discussed in SPS Committee meetings, during the period 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023. Most regular notifications related to human health and food safety regulations, while most emergency notifications related to animal health/animal diseases. During the review period, Members met in October and November 2022 and in February and March 2023 to advance the work programme that emerged from the MC12 SPS Declaration on Responding to Modern SPS Challenges. The outcome of these discussions will be reported to Ministers at MC13.

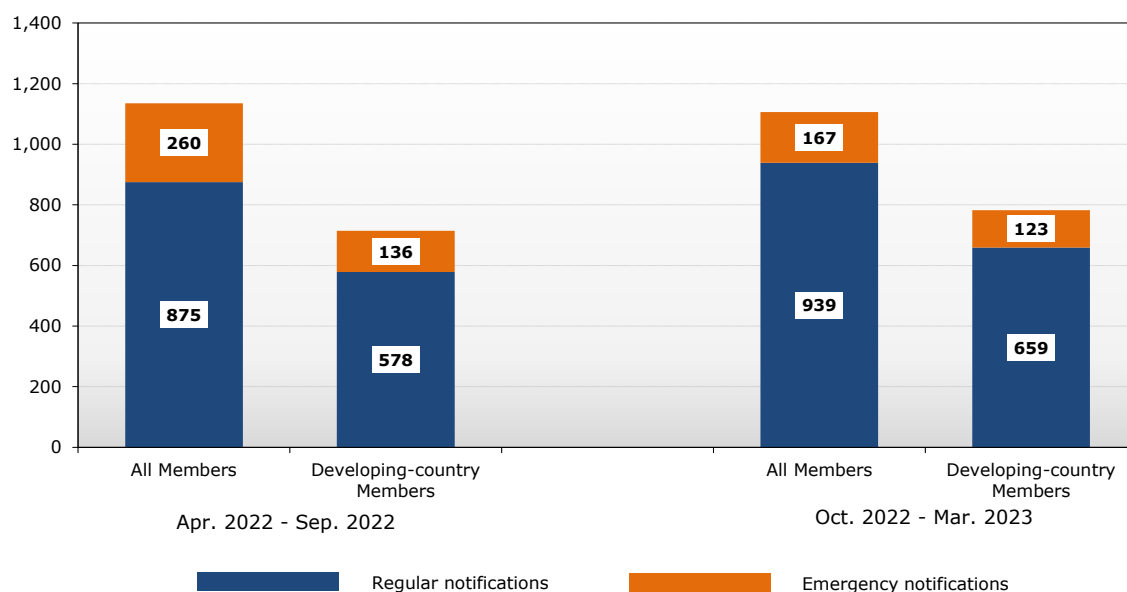
²⁰ WTO documents G/SG/M/61, 1 February 2023 and G/SG/M/62 (forthcoming), respectively.

²¹ Information presented in this Section was retrieved from the [ePing SPS&TBT Platform](#) and in the [Trade Concern Database](#). See also annual reports in WTO document G/SPS/GEN/804/Rev.15, G/SPS/GEN/204/Rev.23, 1 March 2023.

3.60. Under the SPS Agreement, WTO Members are obliged to provide an advance notice of intention to introduce new or modified SPS measures²², or to notify immediately when emergency measures are imposed. The main objective of complying with SPS notification obligations is to inform other Members about new or changed regulations that may significantly affect international trade. Therefore, an increased number of notifications does not automatically imply greater use of protectionist measures, but rather enhanced transparency regarding food safety and animal and plant health measures, most of which are, presumably, legitimate health-protection measures.

3.61. During the review period 1,106 regular and emergency notifications were submitted to the WTO (including revisions and addenda). Compared with the previous six-month period, regular notifications (including revisions and addenda) increased by approximately 7% while emergency notifications (including addenda) decreased by around 36%.

Chart 3.14 Number of SPS notifications, including regular, emergency, revisions, and addenda



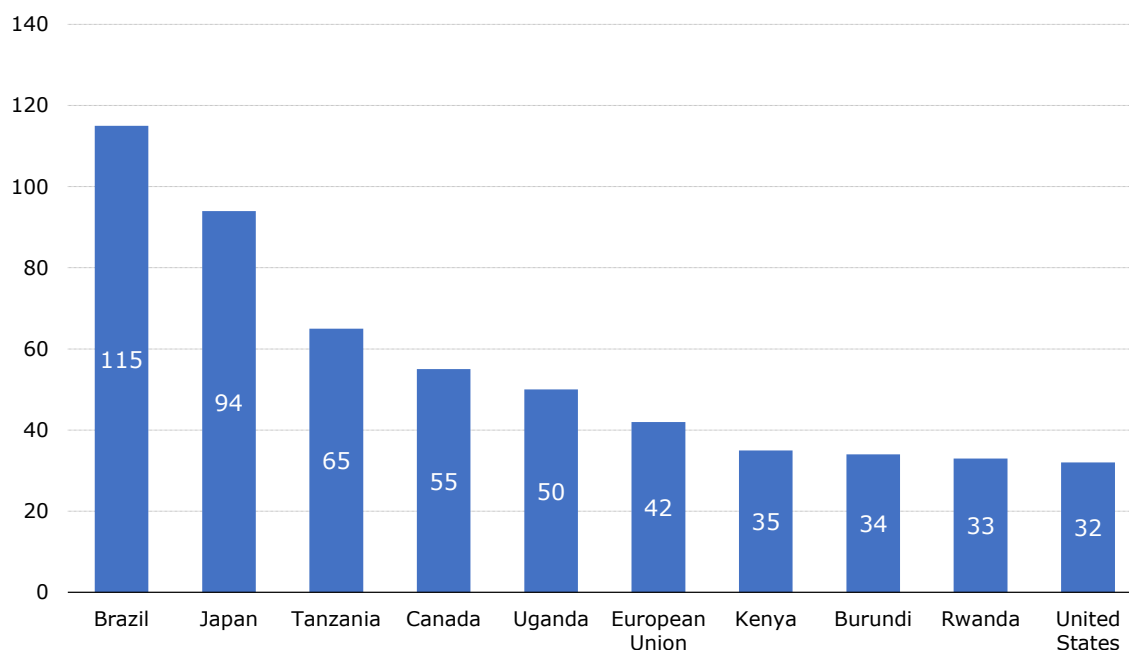
Source: WTO Secretariat.

3.62. During the period under review, 71% of regular and emergency notifications (including revisions and addenda) were submitted by developing and least-developed countries (LDCs) (Chart 3.14). In October 2022, Namibia submitted its first SPS notification.²³ In addition, four African LDCs (Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda) were among the top 10 notifiers of regular notifications during the review period (Chart 3.15). Notifications by these Members included draft East African standards, submitted jointly. The number of regular SPS notifications including revisions and addenda assigned "East African Community" increased by approximately 38% compared to the previous six-month period.

²² Transparency obligations are contained in Article 7 and Annex B of the SPS Agreement.

²³ WTO document G/SPS/N/NAM/1, 18 October 2022.

Chart 3.15 Top 10 notifiers from October 2022 to March 2023 (regular including revisions and addenda)

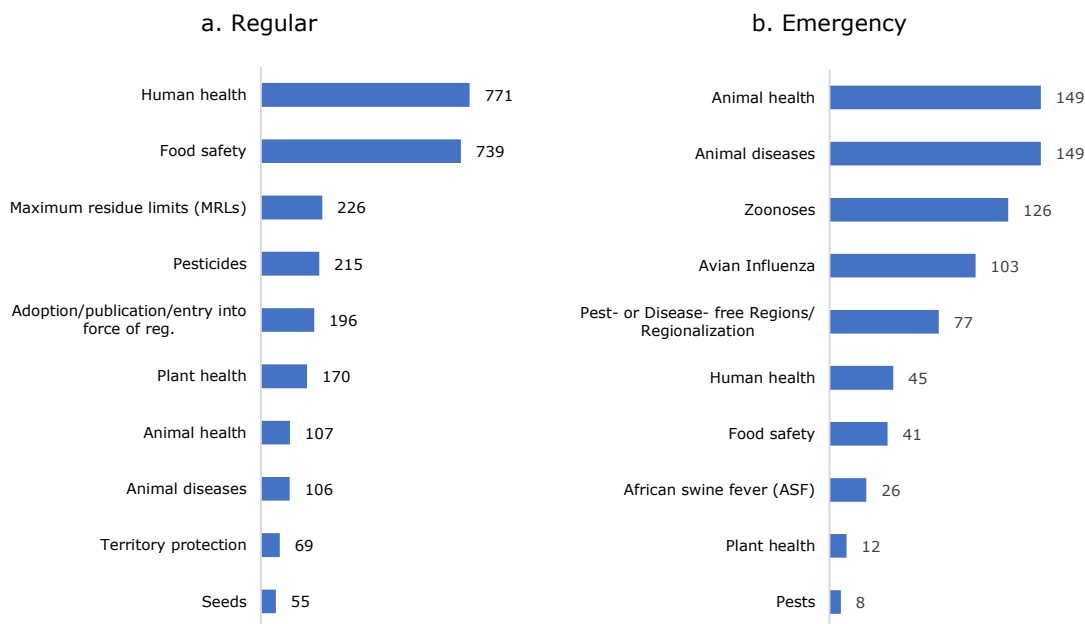


Source: [ePing SPS&TBT Platform](#).

3.63. By keyword, most regular notifications submitted during the review period were related to human health and food safety regulations, followed by measures regulating maximum residue limits of pesticides (pesticides MRLs) (Chart 3.16(a)). Most emergency notifications were associated with animal health and animal diseases (Chart 3.16(b)). Approximately 62% of emergency notifications were associated with avian influenza while less than 1% of regular notifications were related to avian influenza.

3.64. Of the regular and emergency notifications related to avian influenza, about 93% indicated that the measure was in conformity with the relevant international standard compared to 81% in the previous six-month period. The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH, founded as OIE) has noted that "[t]his statement of conformity to the WOAH *Codes* is a self-assessment made by the notifying Member that has not undergone any validation process by the WTO Secretariat. Still, it suggests that most WOAH Members reporting to the WTO do consider the WOAH *Codes* when they amend their legislative framework or introduce new legislation with regard to animal diseases".²⁴

²⁴ WOAH (2022), *Implementation of WOAH Standards: The Observatory Annual Report*, p. 45. Viewed at: <https://www.woah.org/app/uploads/2022/12/annual-report-observatory-2022.pdf>.

Chart 3.16 Top 10 regular and emergency notifications by keyword (including revisions and addenda)²⁵

Source: WTO Secretariat.

3.65. The SPS Agreement requires Members to base SPS-related trade measures on international standards, guidelines, and recommendations, specifically those developed by the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) for food safety, WOAHP for animal health and zoonoses, and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) for plant health. The three standard-setting bodies and the WHO are monitoring the COVID-19 situation and, so far, have not recommended any trade restrictions. In the absence of relevant international standards, SPS measures must be based on a risk assessment. However, it may take some time before sufficient scientific evidence becomes available. Following the outbreak of the pandemic, some Members believed they had to act quickly to ensure appropriate health protection. Under the SPS Agreement, Members have the right to adopt provisional measures based on available information. As more scientific evidence emerges and risk assessments can be carried out, these measures must be reviewed within a reasonable period of time.

3.66. Between 1 February 2020 and 31 March 2023, 31 Members (counting the European Union as one) notified 67 SPS measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The most recent SPS COVID-19-related documents were received on 16 January 2023, when two addenda were notified lifting previous temporary restrictions.²⁶ Twenty-eight measures were notified as regular notifications. Additionally, 29 addenda to regular notifications were submitted, mostly extending both implementation periods of temporary measures and comment periods and dates of adoption of previously notified regulations. Twenty measures were notified as emergency measures. Additionally, 12 emergency addenda were notified, 9 lifting (or partially lifting) temporary restrictions previously imposed and 3 extending the validity of temporary trade-facilitating measures. Nine Members submitted their measures through an information communication (GEN document), and one additional GEN document²⁷ was submitted by 40 Members. Overall, 27% of notifications on COVID-19 were SPS measures.²⁸

²⁵ Notifications can have more than one assigned keyword.

²⁶ WTO documents G/SPS/N/DNK/6/Add.1 and G/SPS/N/HKG/47/Add.1. Search for information on notifications on the [ePing SPS&TBT Platform](#).

²⁷ WTO document G/SPS/GEN/1778/Rev.5, 14 January 2021 (also circulated as WTO document G/TBT/GEN/296/Rev.5, 14 January 2021).

²⁸ WTO, *COVID-19 and World Trade*. Viewed at: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/covid19_e/covid19_e.htm.

3.67. No regular or emergency measures related to COVID-19 were notified during the review period. Two addenda were notified lifting previous temporary restrictions.²⁹ One previously raised STC³⁰ related to COVID-19 was again discussed at the November 2022 and March 2023 SPS Committee meetings.³¹ Overall, two SPS STCs related to COVID-19 have been discussed in the SPS Committee since the start of the pandemic.³²

3.68. Initially, these measures mainly related to restrictions on animal imports and/or transit from affected areas (some of these measures were subsequently lifted), and increased certification requirements. While some restrictions were still imposed at a later stage, most notifications and communications submitted since the beginning of April 2020 relate to measures taken to facilitate trade, by allowing temporary flexibility for control authorities to use electronic versions of veterinary and/or phytosanitary certificates, since the COVID-19 situation has made the transmission of original paper certificates challenging. Overall, about two thirds of notifications (excluding addenda) and communications submitted were measures considered to be trade facilitating.

3.69. By the end of 2022, 98% of all notifications were submitted online through the [ePing SPS&TBT Platform](#). The number of online SPS notifications has steadily increased over the past five years (Box 3.3).

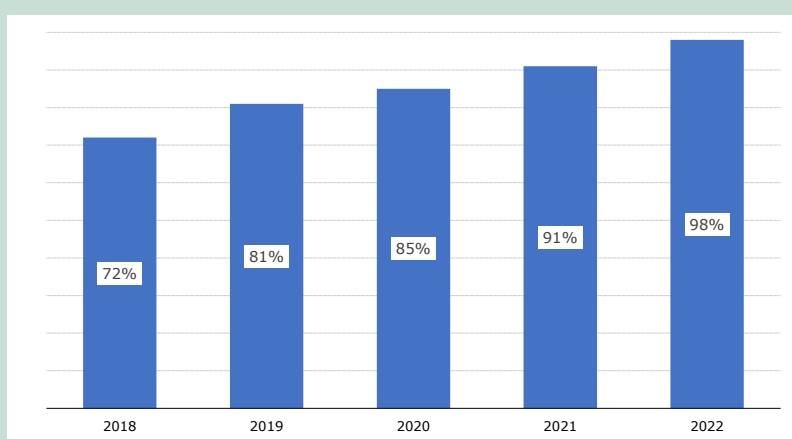
Box 3.3 Facilitating implementation of transparency obligations

Accessing relevant information on SPS or TBT product requirements in export markets can represent a significant challenge, especially for SMEs. WTO Members are required to notify SPS and TBT measures, still in draft form, that may have a significant effect on trade and that are not in accordance with existing international standards. Each year, the WTO receives around 5,000 SPS and TBT notifications.

The [ePing SPS&TBT Platform](#) allows users (governments, economic operators, and civil society) to browse SPS or TBT notifications and trade concerns raised by Members in the WTO SPS and TBT committees using parameters such as product, notifying Member and objective. Additionally, information on enquiry points and notification authorities are available on the Platform. Registered users can also sign up to receive daily or weekly email alerts and to follow notifications on products and/or markets of interest and reach out to national and international counterparts. This facilitates dialogue among the public and private sectors to discuss and share information on notifications of concern, allowing stakeholders to address potential trade problems at an early stage of the regulatory lifecycle.

The ePing SPS&TBT Platform is also the most efficient way to submit notifications to the WTO. It integrates and builds upon the functionalities of the previous SPS Notification Submission System (NSS). In recent years, the number of online submissions of SPS notifications has been steadily increasing, with up to 98% for 2022, including notifications submitted through the Platform.

Online submission of SPS notifications from 2018 to 2022 (through NSS and ePing SPS&TBT Platform)



Source: WTO Secretariat.

²⁹ WTO documents G/SPS/N/DNK/6/Add.1, 16 January 2023 and G/SPS/N/HKG/47/Add.1, 16 January 2023. More detailed information on notifications is available at the [ePing SPS&TBT Platform](#).

³⁰ More detailed information on STCs can be retrieved from the [Trade Concerns Database](#).

³¹ STC 487: China's actions related to COVID-19 that affect trade in food and agricultural products.

³² STCs 487 and 488. Please visit the [Trade Concerns Database](#) for further information on STCs.

3.70. The WTO Secretariat prepares annual transparency reports containing detailed information on the implementation of the transparency provisions of the SPS Agreement.³³

3.71. While there is no formal provision for "counter notification", concerns regarding the failure to notify an SPS measure, or regarding a notified measure, can be raised as an STC at any of the regular meetings of the SPS Committee each year.

3.72. Two SPS Committee meetings were held during the review period, from 9-11 November 2022 and 22-24 March 2023. At these meetings, WTO Members raised 19 STCs for the first time and 50 previously raised STCs were discussed again, including 7 of which that were first raised in the November 2022 meeting; 6 of these STCs addressed problems that had been raised 15 times or more.³⁴

3.73. Of the 19 STCs raised for the first time in the two SPS Committee meetings, 7 (37%) concerned animal health/animal diseases, 6 (32%) concerned food safety, 5 (26%) related to other types of concerns and 1 (5%) covered plant health. Regarding the 43 previously raised STCs during the review period, 15 (35%) covered other types of concerns, 12 (28%) concerned measures covering food safety, 10 (23%) concerned animal health, and 6 (14%) related to plant health. Of the 62 STCs raised or discussed during the review period, 18 (29%) concerned measures covering food safety, 17 (28%) covered animal health, 7 (11%) concerned plant health and 20 (32%) related to other types of concerns.

3.74. At the November 2022 SPS Committee meeting, the Secretariat informed the Committee that it had contacted 37 Members to seek information regarding the status (resolved, partially resolved, or not reported as resolved) of STCs that had not been discussed since November 2020. As a follow-up to the exercise, 31 of these STCs had been reported as resolved and 14 STCs as partially resolved. For transparency purposes, the information provided by Members to the Secretariat was circulated in WTO document G/SPS/GEN/2062/Rev.1 in November 2022, and included the results of similar exercises undertaken in 2013, 2017 and 2020. It was noted that more than 57% of the STCs discussed in the Committee were considered as resolved or partially resolved.³⁵

3.75. In November 2022, the Committee held a thematic session on international standards and best practices in pest risk identification, assessment, and management in close collaboration with the IPPC. Among the topics discussed were the use of technology for pest identification, addressing plant health hazards in different parts of the food system for food safety and food security, and the importance of communication, including among trading partners as well as with the private sector.³⁶

3.76. In March 2023, the SPS Committee adopted WTO document G/SPS/67, which lists existing tools and resources to enhance the implementation of the SPS Agreement relating to SPS approval procedures for food, animal and plant products. It also adopted WTO document G/SPS/68, which provides recommendations on SPS approval procedures. Approval procedures cover any procedure to check and ensure the fulfilment of SPS measures.³⁷ The documents were the outcome of work from the Working Group on Approval Procedures, which had been established following a recommendation from the Fifth Review of the Operation and Implementation of the SPS Agreement, adopted in 2020.³⁸

3.77. At the November 2022 and March 2023 Committee meetings, Ukraine provided the Committee with information on its SPS situation. Several Members expressed their support and showed appreciation for Ukraine's efforts to fulfil its SPS WTO obligations; strongly condemned the

³³ Information available in the latest revision of WTO document G/SPS/GEN/804/Rev.15; G/SPS/GEN/204/Rev.23, 1 March 2023.

³⁴ Information on the previously raised STCs is available in the [Trade Concerns Database](#).

³⁵ See summary report of the November 2022 SPS Committee meeting in WTO document G/SPS/R/108, 16 December 2022.

³⁶ Please visit the event webpage to access the report, presentations, and recordings of the thematic session: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/sps_e/thematic_session_nov22_e.htm.

³⁷ They can, for example, be used to assess products or categories of products before they are allowed into a market to ensure that imported products comply with SPS requirements of the importing country or to check that the SPS system of an exporting country provides necessary assurances before a product enters a market.

³⁸ The full report is available in WTO documents G/SPS/64, 3 August 2020; and G/SPS/64/Add.1, 3 August 2020.

Russian Federation's military action in Ukraine, noting that it constituted a violation of international law and the UN Charter; and stated that the invasion was further exacerbating the current food security crisis. The Russian Federation underlined that the matter was not within the mandate of the WTO and complained that the politically motivated trade-restrictive actions against the Russian Federation imposed by several WTO Members were behind the possible shortages in net food importing countries.³⁹

3.78. During the review period, meetings were held in October and November 2022 and in February and March 2023 to advance the work programme that emerged from the MC12 SPS Declaration on Responding to Modern SPS Challenges (Box 3.4).⁴⁰

Box 3.4 MC12 SPS Declaration work programme

WTO Members and Observers are participating in ongoing discussions as part of the SPS Declaration, which was adopted at MC12 in 2022 (MC12 SPS Declaration), in WTO document WT/MIN(22)/27, 22 June 2022. The Declaration recognizes new opportunities and emerging challenges brought about by the evolution of the global agricultural landscape since the adoption of the SPS Agreement in 1995 and instructed the SPS Committee to carry out a work programme to further enhance the implementation of the SPS Agreement in an effort to better manage issues related to international trade in food, animals and plants.

The MC12 SPS Declaration work programme is being implemented through discussions in five thematic groups:

1. How to facilitate global food security and more sustainable food systems, including through sustainable growth and innovation in agricultural production and international trade, and using international standards, guidelines, and recommendations developed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the WOH and the IPPC as the basis of harmonized SPS measures to protect human, animal or plant life or health.
2. How to support basing SPS measures on scientific evidence and principles, including where international standards, guidelines, or recommendations do not exist or are not appropriate; and how to promote the use by Members of principles employed by the international standard-setting bodies for considering scientific uncertainty in risk analysis.
3. How to enhance the safe international trade in food, animals and plants and products thereof through the adaptation of SPS measures to regional conditions, including pest- or disease-free areas and areas of low pest or disease prevalence which can strengthen Members' ability to protect plant and animal life or health through efforts to limit the spread of pests such as the Mediterranean fruit fly, diseases such as African swine fever, disease-carrying organisms, or disease-causing organisms.
4. How to encourage cooperation with observer organizations that support the work of the SPS Committee and the international standard-setting bodies through technical exchanges and assistance in the context of this work programme.
5. How to increase participation of and support for the special needs of developing and least developed country Members in the development and application of SPS measures; and to increase awareness of and sensitivity to the impacts of SPS measures on the export possibilities of such Members.

The outcome of the work programme, open to Members and Observers including the three international standard-setting bodies recognized in the SPS Agreement (Codex, WOH, IPPC), will be reported to Ministers at MC13 in 2024.

Source: WTO Secretariat.

3.4 Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)

3.79. WTO Members continued to use the TBT Committee's transparency mechanisms to notify their technical barriers to trade (TBT) measures and to discuss and often resolve specific trade concerns (STCs) non-litigiously. Most of the new regular TBT notifications submitted by WTO Members during the review period referred to quality requirements as their main objective. A total of 155 STCs were discussed during the review period. Members have submitted 226 COVID-19-related TBT notifications to the WTO in response to the pandemic since 2020.

³⁹ See the summary reports of the November 2022 and March 2023 SPS Committee meetings in WTO documents G/SPS/R/108, 16 December 2022; and G/SPS/R/109, 5 May 2023, respectively.

⁴⁰ The proposed process for the work programme of the MC12 SPS Declaration is available in WTO document G/SPS/W/330/Rev.1.

Notifications submitted to the TBT Committee

3.80. Under the TBT Agreement, WTO Members are required to notify their intention to introduce new or modified technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures, or to notify adopted emergency measures immediately. The principal objective of complying with the TBT notification obligations is to inform other Members about new or changed regulations that may significantly affect trade and provide an opportunity for comments.

3.81. From 1 October 2022 to 1 May 2023 (the review period), WTO Members submitted 1,325 new regular notifications of TBT measures.⁴¹ Members that notified the most measures during the review period – 60% of all new regular notifications – were Rwanda (160), Kenya (130), Tanzania (125), Uganda (98), Burundi (87), the United States (59), the European Union (47), Brazil (32), the Republic of Korea (33) and Ghana (29). Most of these new regular TBT notifications indicated as their main objective quality requirements. Various other notifications related to protection of human health or safety, consumer information, labelling, prevention of deceptive practices and consumer protection, reducing trade barriers and facilitating trade, harmonization, and protection of the environment.

3.82. A total of 1,080 follow-up notifications (i.e. addenda, corrigenda, or supplements) were submitted during the review period. The continuing and frequent use by Members of follow-up notifications is positive as it increases transparency and predictability across the measures' regulatory lifecycle.

Measures discussed in the TBT Committee (STCs)⁴²

3.83. WTO Members use the TBT Committee as a forum for discussing trade issues related to specific TBT measures proposed or maintained by other Members. Issues can range from requests for additional information and clarification, to questions on the consistency of measures with TBT Agreement disciplines. The overall trend suggests an increasing use of the TBT Committee as a forum for Members to raise and resolve trade concerns non-litigiously.

3.84. A total of 155 (32 new and 123 previously raised) STCs were discussed during the two Committee meetings that fell within the review period. Thirty-two new STCs concerned TBT measures by the European Union (9); India (6); the United States (4); China (2); and 1 each by Angola, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Indonesia, Malaysia, Morocco, Panama, Spain, the United Kingdom and Viet Nam. These new STCs covered regulations on a range of products (e.g. washing machines; hazardous substances; alcoholic beverages; and medical, electrical and charging equipment), and dealt with a variety of issues (e.g. labelling and packaging, waste management, energy efficiency and conservation, conformity assessment procedures and technical regulations).

3.85. During the two Committee meetings covered by the review period, 10 persistent STCs were discussed (these STCs have each been previously raised on more than 16 occasions in Committee meetings).

COVID-19-related TBT notifications and discussions at the TBT Committee

3.86. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, 45% of all notifications submitted by WTO Members in response to COVID-19 were under the TBT Agreement.⁴³ Thirty-four WTO Members submitted 226 COVID-19-related TBT notifications to the WTO. These notifications mostly dealt with extraordinary and temporary streamlining of certification and related procedures, and the introduction of new regulatory requirements for medical goods, in response to the pandemic. The majority (about 66%) of these notifications cover regulations on medical goods, such as PPE, pharmaceutical products, medical devices, other medical supplies, and other products.

⁴¹ Source: [ePing SPS&TBT platform](#).

⁴² This Section takes account of the STCs raised in the TBT Committee meetings of 16-18 November 2022 and 8-10 March 2023.

⁴³ TBT notifications are classified as COVID-19-related if they contain the terms "coronavirus", "COVID", "SARS-COV-2" or "nCoV".

3.87. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Members have referred to the COVID-19 pandemic in 55 STCs. The reference to COVID-19 in these discussions was linked to the significant impact of the pandemic on Members' economies.

3.88. There has been a recent trend of the TBT Committee receiving notifications of regulations on various digital technologies. Box 3.5 takes a closer look at regulatory measures on autonomous vehicles and unmanned aircraft systems notified to the TBT Committee.

Box 3.5 Autonomous vehicles, unmanned aircraft systems and TBT

Autonomous vehicles and unmanned aircraft systems are some of the many novel products emerging from the current wave of digital transformation and are becoming an integrated part of the international trade supply chain. By 2026, the estimated value of the global market for drones is projected to reach USD 58.5 billion⁴⁴, and USD 556.6 billion for autonomous vehicles.⁴⁵

International trade rules, in turn, have important implications for innovation, uptake and governance of such digital technologies. Indeed, governments have been increasingly subjecting autonomous vehicles and unmanned aircraft systems to various non-tariff measures, including a wide variety of regulations falling under the TBT Agreement. Technical standards and regulations provide an essential framework for the development of innovative digital technologies and help address a variety of legitimate public policy concerns associated with their deployment. For example, according to a WCO/WTO Study Report, the relevance and availability of drone technology depend on whether the regulatory environment enables the safe use of drones and on developing a framework that will determine the conditions in which the technology will exist.⁴⁶

WTO Members have already started notifying to the TBT Committee an increasing number of regulations addressing various issues related to autonomous vehicles and unmanned aircraft systems. This trend has been particularly marked in the last five years.

To date, Members have notified at least 57 TBT measures on autonomous vehicles and unmanned aircraft systems to the Committee, 74% of which during the last five years. These measures deal with, *inter alia*, policies on human health and safety, national security, performance, and quality requirements, as well as different conformity assessment procedures (such as testing and certification). Other policy objectives include prevention of deceptive practices and consumer protection and information, cost saving and productivity enhancement, and harmonization. Key notifying Members in this area include China, the European Union, France, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, the United Arab Emirates and the United States.

Examples of such TBT notifications include:

- testing requirements for vehicles that do not require the presence of a driver inside the vehicle (United States).
- technical specifications, assessment, and test requirements as well as administrative requirements needed for the type-approval of the automated driving system of fully automated vehicles (European Union).
- requirements concerning the installation of electronic and optical signalling devices on certain unmanned aircraft to allow national defence and security forces to identify airborne drones and distinguish them from other aircraft during flight. This measure was indicated as necessary to address risks stemming from an increasing number of drones illegally flying over sensitive sites on the territory of the notifying Member (France).
- various safety requirements and test methods for civil unmanned aircraft products (China).
- certain certification requirements for certain unmanned aircraft systems (United States).

Members have also raised at least four STCs with respect to regulations on these types of products. For example, such concerns relate to regulations on unmanned aircraft systems⁴⁷, procedures and technical

⁴⁴ WCO/WTO Study Report on Disruptive Technologies (June 2022). Viewed at: [WTO | WCO/WTO Study Report on Disruptive Technologies](#).

⁴⁵ See e.g. [Sharp Growth In Autonomous Car Market Value Predicted But May Be Stalled By Rise In Consumer Fear \(forbes.com\)](#).

⁴⁶ WCO/WTO Study Report on Disruptive Technologies (June 2022). Viewed at: [WTO | WCO/WTO Study Report on Disruptive Technologies](#).

⁴⁷ Viewed at: [European Union - Commission Delegated Regulation \(EU\) 2019/945 on Unmanned Aircraft Systems and on Third-country Operators of Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(ID 585\)](#).

specifications for the type-approval of vehicles with regard to their automated driving system⁴⁸ and emergency lane keeping system⁴⁹, and safety declaration of advanced autonomous driving function.⁵⁰

Source: WTO Secretariat.

Developments in the context of the war in Ukraine

3.89. At the TBT Committee meeting of 8-10 March 2023, Ukraine and several other Members expressed their strong opposition to the war in Ukraine, with several Members noting that it violated international law. The Russian Federation called on Members to refrain from interventions on issues and events that were outside the scope of the TBT Committee and the WTO itself.⁵¹

3.90. At the TBT Committee meetings of 16-18 November 2022 and 8-10 March 2023, Ukraine provided an update of its TBT activities. Ukraine stated that while the work of relevant bodies in the field of technical regulations, standardization and metrology faced significant losses under the wartime conditions, it continued to take steps to ensure proper functioning of technical regulatory system. Ukraine had submitted 70 notifications and replied to 50 requests related to TBT issues since 2022. In addition, all accredited bodies responsible for conformity assessment in Ukraine continue to carry out conformity assessment procedures. The National Standardization Programme for 2023 provided for the development of 1,843 draft national standards, of which 1,133 standards would be harmonized with international and European standards.⁵² In the same context, Ukraine also notified to the TBT Committee the postponement of entry into force of certain regulatory measures as a result of the martial law in Ukraine.⁵³

3.5 Policy developments in agriculture

3.91. During the period under review, the Committee on Agriculture (CoA) held two regular meetings, on 21-22 November 2022 and 27-28 March 2023.⁵⁴ Domestic support dominated the discussions especially on measures and notifications from China, India, and the United States. Discussions also focused on export restrictions on foodstuffs and food security, a key theme for a potential outcome at MC13.

3.92. The CoA provides a forum for Members to discuss matters related to agricultural trade, and to consult on matters related to Members' implementation of commitments under the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA). The review work of the CoA is based on notifications that Members make in relation to their commitments and on matters raised under Article 18.6 of the AoA (i.e. Specific Implementation Matters (SIMs)). During the period under review, Members posed a total of 308 questions.⁵⁵

3.93. As the following statistics would demonstrate, a vast majority of issues raised in the Committee concerned domestic support and export-limiting measures. On notifications, a total of 300 notifications were submitted by Members between 15 October 2022 and 15 May 2023. This represents an increase in the number of notifications of close to 60% compared to the same period last year. This increase is due to the Committee's efforts in reducing the number of outstanding export subsidy notifications (Table ES:1) as described in the Transparency section below. A total of

⁴⁸ Viewed at: [European Union - Draft Commission implementing regulation laying down rules for the application of Regulation \(EU\) 2019/2144 of the European Parliament and the Council as regards uniform procedures and technical specifications for the type-approval of fully automated motor vehicles with regard to their automated driving system \(ADS\) \(ID 766\)](#).

⁴⁹ Viewed at: [European Union - Uniform procedures and technical specifications for the type-approval of motor vehicles with regard to their emergency lane keeping system \(ELKS\) \(ID 700\)](#).

⁵⁰ Viewed at: [Russian Federation - On Safety of Wheeled Vehicles \(TR CU 018/2011\) \(ID 687\)](#).

⁵¹ WTO document G/TBT/M/89 (forthcoming).

⁵² WTO documents G/TBT/M/88, 8 February 2023; and G/TBT/M/89 (forthcoming).

⁵³ WTO documents G/TBT/N/UKR/233, 27 October 2022; G/TBT/N/UKR/212/Add.1, 15 November 2022; G/TBT/N/UKR/234/Add.1, 23 November 2022; and G/TBT/N/UKR/124/Add.2, 25 November 2022.

⁵⁴ The reports of these meetings can be found in WTO document G/AG/R/104, 17 January 2023; and G/AG/R/105 (forthcoming).

⁵⁵ Questions can be accessed through the compilation of questions issued for each CoA meeting under WTO documents G/AG/W/226, 11 November 2022 (21-22 November CoA meeting); and G/AG/W/231, 17 March 2023 (27-28 March CoA meeting). All questions and answers are available in the Agriculture Information Management System ([AG-IMS](#)).

135 questions concerned individual notifications (43% of the total number of questions). Of these questions, 85% related to domestic support notifications, whereas the remaining 15% related to notifications in market access, export subsidies and export restrictions and prohibitions. On matters raised under Article 18.6 of the AoA, 23 Members raised 171 questions on 75 SIMs in the meetings considered in this review.⁵⁶ Out of the 75 SIMs, more than half (44 SIMs) were discussed for the first time. Of these, 55% related to domestic support policies, 16% concerned policies prohibiting or restricting exports of foodstuffs, 11% concerned market access issues, and the remaining 18% concerned export competition issues and other matters.

3.94. In the area of domestic support, significant attention was paid to reviewing support measures and notifications by China, India and the United States. Several questions were posed to China on its latest domestic support notification covering the period 2017-20. Most of these questions concerned the evolution of market price support and the associated calculation methodology, recourse to Blue Box and China's compliance with its domestic support (i.e. *de minimis*) commitments. Through these latest notifications, China asserted that it had been compliant with its domestic support commitments since 2020. The Committee also continued its review of India's domestic support notifications, which entail the invocation of the Bali Public Stockholding Decision peace clause starting 2018/19 for the breach of the *de minimis* limit for rice. The focus of discussions, including based on detailed written questions by several Members, was on the level of annual minimum support prices, information on pre-determined stocks, domestic release of public stocks, calculation methodology of market price support and information on and accounting of provincial-level price bonuses. Domestic support measures and notifications by the United States were also subject to extensive review where the United States' Current Total AMS in one of the reported years reached USD 18.1 billion, the highest level since 1995 and also close to its Total AMS limit of USD 19.1 billion. Increased spending during the period was attributed to two new *ad hoc* support measures, namely the Market Facilitation programme and Coronavirus Food Assistance Programme, both of which have since expired. Questions were also raised on the United States' changed reporting practice with respect to *ad hoc* support programmes.

3.95. Export-limiting measures on foodstuffs were also subject to several specific questions in the Committee during this period. These questions were raised on Argentina's measures on beef and some grains; China's export prohibition on corn starch; Egypt's export restrictions on wheat, flour, lentils, rice and some other products; Hungary's measure on wheat and other grains; India's export restrictions on wheat and rice; Indonesia's export restrictions on palm oil; Malaysia's export restrictions on chicken and eggs; Mexico's export restriction on white corn; and Morocco's, Tajikistan's, and Türkiye's export restrictions on some vegetables. The main thrust of all these questions was on assessing the consistency of these measures with the relevant WTO rules, ascertaining how the interests of affected importing countries were considered and underlining the importance of timely export-restricting notification to the Committee. In some cases, the concerned Members subject to questions informed the Committee about an adjustment in the scope of the measure, its complete elimination or even declined having applied the export restriction.

3.96. Significant interest was also shown by Members to review the European Union's deforestation and forest degradation strategy. A group of developing Members shared with the Committee a [joint letter](#)⁵⁷, which they wrote to the EU Parliament, Council and Commission expressing concerns on the extra-territorial nature of the proposed regulation, potential negative and discriminatory effect on developing countries' export interests and the need for dialogue with potentially affected developing Members to address their concerns.

Transparency

3.97. Members began discussions on streamlining of notifications and transparency requirements in export competition. In view of a majority of export subsidy notifications stating no recourse to such subsidies ("nil" statements), including in the wake of the 2015 Nairobi Export Competition [Decision](#)⁵⁸, the Committee decided to allow Members to make an oral announcement in Committee about the absence of export subsidies in order to clear their outstanding export subsidy notifications.

⁵⁶ Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Ecuador, European Union, India, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Russian Federation, Switzerland, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay and Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

⁵⁷ WTO document G/AG/GEN/213, 29 November 2022.

⁵⁸ WTO document WT/MIN(15)/45, WT/L/980, 21 December 2015.

This new simplified avenue was used for the first time by six LDC Members (Guinea, Haiti, Mauritania, Niger, Sierra Leone and Uganda) at the March 2023 meeting of the Committee to announce their non-recourse to agricultural export subsidies, thus fulfilling their outstanding export subsidy obligations collectively for 125 outstanding years.

Food security

3.98. Food security remained high on the agenda of the Committee especially since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Food security is also routinely referred to by Members as a key theme for potential deliverables at MC13. Pursuant to the mandate in paragraph 8 of the Ministerial Declaration on the Emergency Response to Food Insecurity⁵⁹, the Committee approved a work programme⁶⁰ to consider food security concerns of least-developed countries and net food-importing developing countries (LDCs and NFIDCs) comprising the following four themes: access to international food markets; financing of food imports; agricultural and production resilience of LDCs and NFIDCs; and horizontal issues, including collaboration with international organizations. The Committee also established a Working Group to undertake thematic deliberations. The Working Group aims to achieve concrete solutions no later than end-November 2023. Since then, the Working Group has already met three times and organized dedicated discussions on several elements forming part of the work programme supported by two detailed thematic workshops on agricultural financing and on productivity and resilience. Members also reviewed their collective responses⁶¹ to a Questionnaire⁶² on food security needs and challenges of LDCs and NFIDCs, which the Working Group finalized last year. A dedicated [webpage](#) includes more details on discussions under the work programme.⁶³

Developments in the context of the war in Ukraine

3.99. References to the conflict in Ukraine figured routinely in the Committee's discussions on food security and under specific matters dealing with trade in grains where the Russian Federation and Ukraine were, respectively, the first and fifth largest exporters of wheat globally, accounting together for 25% of global exports of this commodity in 2021.⁶⁴ Several Members expressed concerns over the continuing war in Ukraine and its serious impact on global food security. The Russian Federation raised the issue of economic and trade sanctions and port restrictions, including by way of written questions or SIMs.

3.6 General economic support

3.100. At the 6 December 2022 TPRB formal meeting dedicated to discussing the Director-General's Annual Overview of Developments in the International Trading Environment⁶⁵, WTO Members engaged in a constructive exchange of views. Some Members expressed strong support for the Secretariat's coverage on economic support measures and stressed the importance of enhanced transparency in this area. Several Members referred to the pandemic-related economic support measures and insisted on their potential distortive impact, especially for developing countries and low-income economies. Others underlined the need for consensus on the scope of the exercise and called on WTO Members to further participate in the Reports and to engage in discussions to improve the exercise, including as part of the 7th TPRM Appraisal.

3.101. Since July 2017, the Trade Monitoring Reports have not included a separate Annex on general economic support measures. This has been partly due to the low participation and response rate of WTO Members to the request for information on such measures, and partly because such an Annex was biased against those Members that traditionally share and publish detailed information on such policies. Discussions among delegations have addressed this issue with several emphasizing the need to preserve and strengthen transparency through the Trade Monitoring Exercise. Several

⁵⁹ WTO document WT/MIN(22)/28, WT/L/1139, 22 June 2022.

⁶⁰ WTO document G/AG/35, 22 November 2022.

⁶¹ WTO document G/AG/W/233, 3 April 2023.

⁶² WTO document G/AG/GEN/214, 8 December 2022.

⁶³ Viewed at: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/agric_e/wrkprog-fsldcs_e.htm.

⁶⁴ WTO document G/AG/GEN/204, 6 September 2022, para. 5.

⁶⁵ WTO document WT/TPR/OV/25, 22 November 2022.

Members welcomed the online COVID-19 support measures list⁶⁶ compiled by the WTO Secretariat, which was put in place in the early stages of the pandemic. The list provides an informal situation report and is an attempt to enhance transparency around support measures taken in response to the pandemic. It includes only information and measures communicated by delegations directly to the WTO Trade Monitoring Section and only in the original language of the submission.

Regular economic support measures (not related to COVID-19)

3.102. In response to Director-General's 10 March 2023 request for information for this Trade Monitoring Report, 41 WTO Members (Albania; Costa Rica; the European Union⁶⁷; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Jamaica; Mongolia; Montenegro; Mozambique; the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; Switzerland; Thailand; Türkiye; and the United Kingdom) volunteered information on 75 regular general economic support measures unrelated to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Secretariat's own research suggests that during the review period numerous other support measures with potentially important implications for trade were implemented by WTO Members.

3.103. According to the regular support measures communicated by WTO Members and those identified by the Secretariat, an increase was observed during the review period in the introduction of new support measures by governments. Most measures were environmental impact reduction programmes, including renewable-energy production schemes through new technologies, support for energy efficiency and decarbonization, support for solar photovoltaic systems, investments in alternative energy power plants and in clean- and renewable-energy projects. Other measures included credits to energy firms, schemes to compensate companies for higher electricity prices and investments to expand productive capacities by reducing environmental impacts.

3.104. Several measures were introduced to support farmers and the agricultural sector, including support for crop prices and food production plans, and aid schemes to support the livestock sector and other specific agricultural sectors, such as wheat, barley, and olive oil. Several of these measures were linked to the effects of the war in Ukraine. Incentives were also provided for the use of technologies to increase agricultural productivity, grants to support agri-food companies and general programmes for the development of bio-agriculture. Other support measures implemented during the review period targeted tourism, aviation, and transport. Some support schemes were provided for the rollout of electric vehicle infrastructure. Certain measures also included support to cope with inflation, fiscal incentives, investments to promote digital development and support to high-tech strategic industries, including on semiconductors, secondary batteries, or biotech.

3.105. As in the past, several of these economic support measures were introduced as multi-year programmes, with financial disbursements staggered over the lifetime of a project and some were one-off grants or aid schemes. Assessing the scope and scale of government economic support programmes remains a difficult task, as reliable, comprehensive, and comparable data are not easily available. The lack of reliable information has shifted the focus of analysts to firm-level data as a possible alternative for measuring support programmes. Recent OECD work⁶⁸ has shown that although the type of support received by firms differs greatly across sectors, the complexity of supply chains makes it hard to identify the ultimate beneficiaries of government support.

3.106. The Trade Monitoring Exercise does not make any judgement as to the WTO-compatibility of any of the measures referred to in this Section. While it is possible that these measures, whether taken as part of an overall commercial strategy or as part of an emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic, may affect trade in some way, it is not always easy to conclude that they restrict or facilitate trade (and by how much), or that they distort competition.

⁶⁶ WTO, *COVID-19: Support Measures*. Viewed at: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/covid19_e/trade_related_support_measures_e.htm.

⁶⁷ Counting the EU-27 and its members separately.

⁶⁸ OECD Trade Policy Paper, April 2023 n° 270, Government Support in Industrial Sectors, A Synthesis Report. Viewed at: <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/1d28d299-en.pdf?expires=1685456054&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=AF944BAA7184BFA6F735D3E5146C1D4A>.

COVID-19-related economic support measures

3.107. In response to Director-General's 10 March 2023 request for information, 10 Members⁶⁹ volunteered information on 36 COVID-19-related support measures to the Secretariat, mainly related to extensions, renewals, or terminations of measures. The number of the pandemic-related support measures introduced by governments during this review period significantly decreased compared to the peak observed in the second, third and fourth quarters of 2020.

3.108. Since the beginning of the pandemic, at least 1,784 COVID-19-related economic support measures have been put in place by 113 Members and 7 Observers.⁷⁰ Of these, by mid-May 2023, 1,139 (64%) were communicated directly to the WTO Secretariat. More than half of these measures (55%) were introduced by G20 economies. The number of COVID-19-related support measures put in place since the beginning of the pandemic far exceeded the activity seen in the wake of the global financial crisis of 2008-09.

3.109. Governments followed diverse approaches in introducing pandemic-related support to their economies. Measures came in the form of grants, loans or stimulus packages targeting sectors of the economy heavily affected by the pandemic as well as fiscal and financial measures to support businesses and MSMEs and broader stimulus packages. Another set of support measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic included various interventions by Central Banks. The responses of high-income economies have been significantly more generous than those offered by lower-income economies in terms of the number and variety of measures implemented and funds allocated.

3.110. The COVID-19-related support measures have generally appeared to be temporary in nature. However, information about terminations, including specific legislative acts rolling back support programmes entirely or partially, is often not displayed on governmental websites, announced in the press, or not regularly communicated to the Secretariat. Therefore, providing an accurate number of terminated measures is difficult.

Developments in the context of the food crisis, the energy crisis, and the conflict in Ukraine

3.111. The current review period saw many general economic support measures in response to the continuing interlinked crises in the energy and food sectors and because of surging inflation. The various impacts felt because of the war in Ukraine, the food crisis and climate-related events continued to weigh heavily on the global economy and governments responded with a range of measures that may affect trade directly or indirectly. Several WTO Members have referred to the importance of monitoring such measures, especially in the context of a crisis.

3.112. The following box provides information on the new online WTO database on subsidy notifications submitted under the SCM Agreement.

Box 3.6 WTO Subsidy Database

On 25 May 2023, the Secretariat launched the [WTO Subsidy Database](#), which contains information from subsidy notifications submitted by WTO Members under the SCM Agreement for the 2021 notification cycle.

Following the structure of the notification format used by WTO Members (WTO document G/SCM/6/Rev.1, 11 November 2011), the database contains information on the description, policy objective, duration and type of measure, as well as information on the eligibility criteria, monetary amounts and statistical data on the potential trade effects of the measure, as notified by relevant WTO Members. By presenting the information in spreadsheet format, the database is intended to make the notified information more accessible, making it easier to search and analyse than in the PDF versions of Members' original documents, all of which are publicly available.

Source: WTO Secretariat.

3.113. The following box on corporate subsidies has been contributed by Global Trade Alert.

⁶⁹ Cambodia; Chile; Hong Kong, China; Macao, China; Mongolia; Montenegro; Myanmar; Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; Thailand and the United Kingdom.

⁷⁰ Azerbaijan, Belarus, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Iraq, Lebanon, and Serbia.

Box 3.7 Corporate subsidies: A global perspective

In recent years, certain high-profile subsidy initiatives became a source of discord between trading partners, leading to fears of copy-cat or tit-for-tat responses. Rather than dwell on specific episodes, this box provides evidence on worldwide subsidy dynamics.

While there are differences across jurisdictions in the amounts of information made available by public authorities, it is remarkable how much information can be gleaned from the websites of public bodies as well as from legally mandated corporate statements pertaining to the award and receipt of corporate subsidies. The Global Trade Alert team has systematically collected information on changes in corporate subsidy policies and the award of corporate subsidies since 1 November 2008. This evidence collection effort does not include foreign aid measures, welfare state payments, transfers between different levels of government, and subsidies where the transfer of state resources was less than USD 10 million. All corporate subsidies recorded are selective in at least one respect. Subsidies are not excluded from the Global Trade Alert inventory just because their stated purpose was non-economic or innovation-related.

A total of 23,670 corporate subsidy awards and changes in policies towards corporate subsidies have been documented and are available in a [downloadable inventory](#). This total refers to subsidies paid to firms competing in markets at home – excluding therefore state-provided export incentives of any type. In over 97% of the records assembled, information on a corporate subsidy initiative is backed up by an official source or a legally mandated corporate disclosure. Taking the European Union as a single customs territory, a total of 121 customs territories are responsible for these recorded subsidy interventions.

Many governments have awarded corporate subsidies during crises, such as the Global Financial Crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. Even so, a total of 11,012 corporate subsidy awards to firms competing in home markets were documented during the years 2011 to 2019. During crisis years, the percentage of recorded subsidy interventions that involved reductions or removal of state support was 1.5%. Between 2011 and 2019 that percentage rose to 2.1%. Subsidy cuts are not the norm.

When transferring resources to firms competing in markets at home, governments have chosen from 12 different types of subsidies. On over 9,600 occasions, governments have awarded financial grants. In another 7,121 instances, loans by state bodies have been provided. On 1,861 separate occasions, loan guarantees have been provided by governments. Selective tax reductions have been given in just under 1,700 cases. A total of 969 production subsidies have been provided and 962 capital injections or other forms of bailout have been given by public bodies.

Subsidies to farmers and other agriculture producer interests have long been in focus in trade policy deliberations. A total of 4,469 such subsidy awards and policy changes have been documented. A further 5,658 corporate subsidy interventions have been recorded in service sectors of national economies. The majority of subsidies can be found, therefore, in manufacturing and the sectors associated with industrial production. The impact of corporate subsidies on conditions of competition are not confined to any one type of economic activity.

One feature of the Global Trade Alert's data collection effort is that, where they can be credibly established for goods producers, the HS codes of the goods are identified where the conditions of competition are affected by the award of a corporate subsidy. Since the focus here is on subsidies to local firms, the markets inside a customs territory that are likely to be affected by a corporate subsidy award can then be identified. In what follows, the attention is only on those subsidy awards that likely tilt the commercial playing field in favour of local firms.

Using the most disaggregated United Nations Comtrade data available, it is possible to identify which trading partners exported to a destination foreign market where a subsidy was awarded to one or more foreign import-competing firms. Employing accepted techniques for calculating the amount of trade covered, it is possible to estimate the share of any nation's exports to a trading partner that were in product lines where subsidies have been awarded to import-competing firms. Such calculations reveal the foreign market access at risk from subsidizing local firms.

The table below reveals the market access at risk for different groups of exporters to subsidies in effect in May 2023.

Group of exporters	Share of exports competing with at least one subsidized import-competing firm in May 2023
ASEAN	0.431
EU-27	0.505
Eurasian Economic Union	0.649
G20	0.469
G7	0.481
Latin America and the Caribbean	0.660
LDCs	0.440
Middle East and North Africa	0.467
Non-G20	0.518
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.536
Worldwide (all customs territories)	0.487

Source: Global Trade Alert, May 2023.

When interpreting these market-access-at-risk statistics, it should be borne in mind that they are almost certainly underestimates.

While these market-access-at-risk estimates reveal the degree to which cross-border trade in goods may be influenced by subsidies to import-competing firms, it is worth recalling that some subsidies can have domestic and cross-border benefits that go beyond the recipient firm. Establishing the magnitude of any such benefits can provide valuable inputs to policy deliberation as can estimates of the effect of corporate subsidies on cross-border movements of goods, services, and investment.

Source: Global Trade Alert.

3.7 Other selected trade policy developments

Council for Trade in Goods

3.114. At the 24-25 November 2023 meeting⁷¹ of the Council for Trade in Goods (CTG), 45 trade concerns were raised, the highest number of trade concerns ever raised at a single meeting of the CTG. This number has more than doubled since 2019. Concerns were raised on measures by Australia (2); China (7); Egypt (2); the European Union (11); India (4); Indonesia (2); Mexico (1); Nigeria (1); Pakistan (1); Panama (1) and the Philippines (1). A concern was also raised by the following Members as a group: the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, the State of Kuwait, Oman, and Qatar (1); the United Kingdom (2); the United States (7); Viet Nam (1); and on one measure implemented by Australia, Canada, the European Union, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Of the 45 trade concerns, 9 related to political tensions between China and the United States, and 7 to unilateral environmental measures with a trade impact.

3.115. At the 3-4 April 2023 CTG meeting⁷², 41 trade concerns were raised, most related to increased political tensions and/or unilateral environmental measures. Trade concerns concerned measures by Australia (1), China (7), Egypt (2), the European Union (9), India (5), Indonesia (2), , Mexico (1), Nepal (1), Pakistan (1), Panama (1), the United Kingdom (2), the United States (7) and on one measure implemented by the following Members: Australia, Canada, the European Union, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. A concern was also raised by the following Members as a group: the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, the State of Kuwait, Oman, and Qatar.

Aid for Trade

3.116. Launched at the 2005 Ministerial Conference, the Aid-for-Trade Initiative helps developing countries, and in particular the least developed among them, to build the supply-side capacity and trade-related infrastructure they need to benefit from WTO Agreements and expand their trade.

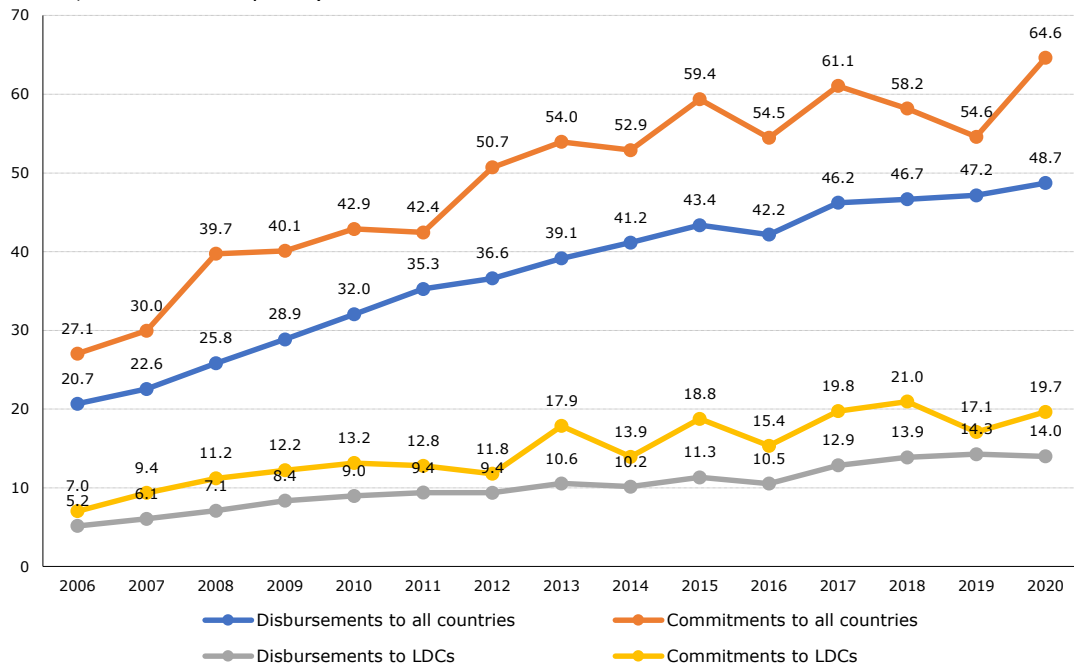
3.117. Since 2006, a total of USD 556 billion has been disbursed for financing Aid-for-Trade programmes and projects, with disbursements to LDCs amounting to USD 152 billion (Chart 3.17). In 2020, an equal share of disbursements (49%) was allocated to building productive capacity and economic infrastructure. Africa and Asia remained the largest beneficiaries (Chart 3.18). Disbursements reached a total of USD 48.7 billion in 2020.

⁷¹ WTO document G/C/M/144, 10 March 2023.

⁷² WTO document G/C/M/145, 22 May 2023.

Chart 3.17 Aid-for-Trade commitments and disbursements by income group

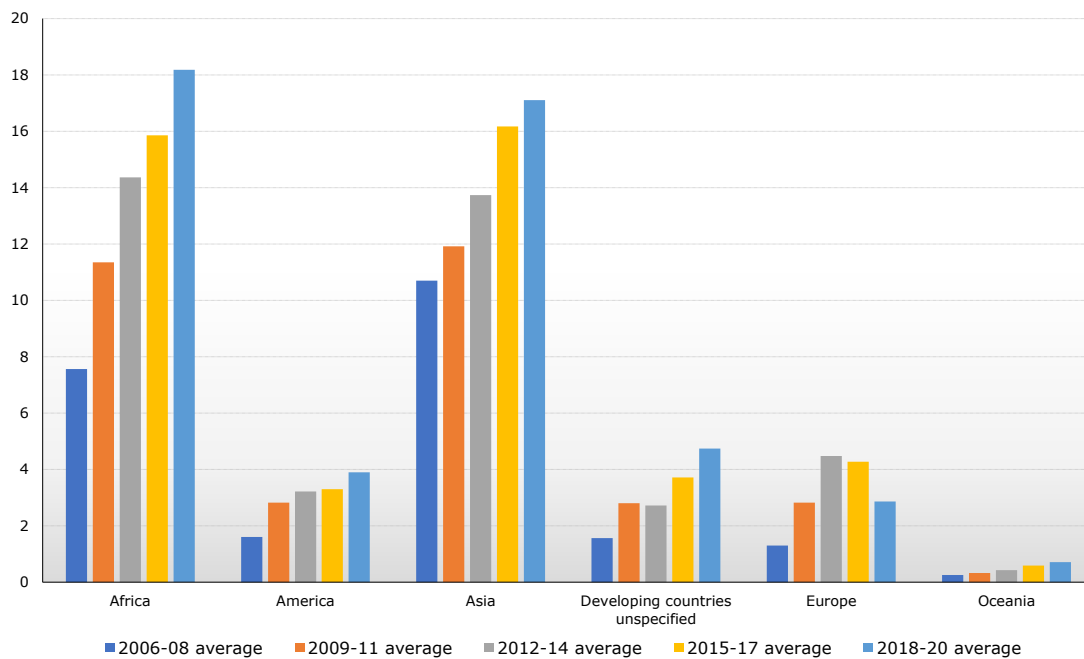
(USD billion, 2020 constant prices)



Source: OECD-CRS (Creditor Reporting System).

Chart 3.18 Aid-for-Trade disbursements by continent

(USD billion, 2020 constant prices)



Source: OECD-CRS (Creditor Reporting System).

3.118. On 10 February 2023, Members adopted the 2023-24 work programme under the title "Partnerships for Food Security, Digital Technology and Mainstreaming Trade", which also foresees a series of thematic workshops planned throughout the biennium. The centrepiece of the work programme is expected to be the ninth Global Review, to be held in mid-2024. The Review will be underpinned by a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) exercise.

Committee on Import Licensing

3.119. At the 23 May 2023 meeting of the Committee on Import Licensing⁷³, nine recurring trade concerns were raised. Four concerns were raised regarding Indonesia's Commodity Balancing Mechanism, import licensing regime for certain textile products, compulsory registration by importer of steel products, and import restrictions on air conditioners. Additionally, Members expressed concerns regarding Angola's import licensing requirements, Dominican Republic's new import licensing system, Egypt's import licensing requirements for certain agricultural and processed products, India's importation of pneumatic tyres, and Thailand's importation of wheat feed.

Electronic commerce

3.120. Work under the Work Programme on e-commerce has intensified pursuant to the MC12 Decision, which called for the reinvigoration of the Work Programme with particular emphasis on its development dimension. The Decision also requested Members to intensify discussions on the scope, definition, and impact of the moratorium. In the first quarter of 2023, Members engaged constructively and shared national and regional experiences on several identified topics, namely consumer protection, digital divide, legal and regulatory frameworks, and the moratorium on the imposition of customs duties on electronic transmissions. Several delegations have circulated submissions as inputs to the dedicated discussions. In sharing views on what the WTO could do in these areas either on its own or in coordination with other organizations, many have highlighted the need for the WTO to use its convening power to bring together relevant intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) working on e-commerce matters. In that regard, a workshop with IGOs is planned for 1-2 June 2023 and will focus on the four themes discussed to date. In terms of the way forward, the facilitator has encouraged Members to start reflecting on possible outcomes and recommendations for Ministers at MC13 with respect to the Work Programme and the moratorium.

3.121. Under the Joint Statement Initiative on E-commerce, the now 89 participants⁷⁴ are accelerating work towards a substantial conclusion by end of 2023. In that regard, the March cluster of negotiations witnessed re-engagement on core issues, some of which had not been discussed for some time, namely the legal architecture, data flows and data localization, source code, the moratorium, and development. To date, participants have reached convergence on 11 articles: open government data, consumer protection, spam, e-signatures and e-authentication, e-contracts, transparency, cybersecurity, open Internet access, paperless trading, electronic transactions frameworks, and e-invoicing, on which technical discussions were exhausted in February 2023. Recent negotiating clusters reflect the co-conveners' objective of increasing the momentum in the negotiations, including by holding information sessions on specific issues with the participation of a variety of stakeholders.

Fisheries subsidies

3.122. Work on fisheries subsidies intensified following the adoption of the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies at MC12. In October 2022, Members suggested at a brainstorming retreat on the substance and process of further negotiations (Second Wave Negotiations), to start with a knowledge-building exercise to inform the negotiations. On that basis, the Secretariat organized two workshops, on implementing the current Agreement and the evolution of the outstanding issues, and on data concerning the state of fisheries resources and fisheries subsidies.

3.123. On 27 January 2023, the Chair of the Negotiating Group on Rules circulated a work programme of four week-long clusters of meetings (Fish Weeks) to be held between March and July with a view to engaging on the basis of a single text by the summer. The Fish Weeks held in March and April involved vigorous exchanges on outstanding issues among hundreds of participating delegates based in Geneva and in capitals. In those discussions, Members reaffirmed their commitment to fulfil the MC12 mandate of achieving a comprehensive Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies by MC13.

3.124. Seven regional technical assistance and capacity-building workshops have been organized by the Secretariat to provide capital-based trade and fisheries officials from developing and LDC Members with a detailed understanding of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, and to

⁷³ WTO document G/LIC/M/56 (forthcoming).

⁷⁴ Kyrgyz Republic joined in February 2023 and Oman in April 2023.

facilitate an exchange of views and experiences on entry into force and implementation of the Agreement and the Second Wave Negotiations. The Director-General held Minister-level engagements alongside the workshops for the Pacific, Arab, and French-speaking Africa regions.

3.125. As of 16 May 2023, the WTO Secretariat has received instruments of acceptance from Switzerland (acceptance date of 20 January 2023), Singapore (10 February 2023), Seychelles (10 March 2023), the United States (11 April 2023), Canada (2 May 2023), Iceland (10 May 2023) and the United Arab Emirates (16 May 2023).

3.126. The WTO Fisheries Funding Mechanism was established in November 2022 to assist developing countries and LDCs implement the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies. Australia, Germany, Iceland, Japan and Canada have contributed to the new WTO Fisheries Trust Fund.

Government procurement

3.127. The plurilateral WTO Agreement on Government Procurement 2012 (GPA 2012) is an important instrument for keeping GPA Parties' government procurement markets open and safeguarding good governance in their government procurement markets. Currently, the GPA 2012 has 21 Parties, covering 48 WTO Members⁷⁵ and there are 37 observers to the Committee on Government Procurement (CGP).

3.128. During the reporting period, the GPA Parties made further progress on the accession of North Macedonia to the GPA 2012. The conclusion of this accession, on mutually agreeable and appropriate terms, would be significant for the GPA 2012 and it would send a strong signal to the countries in the region.

3.129. Albania has reiterated its commitment to accede to the GPA 2012. It indicated that a working group responsible for Albania's accession to the GPA 2012 had been established.

3.130. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) became an IGO observer to the CGP.

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises

3.131. In 2023, the Informal Working Group on Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) adopted a new programme of work based on five pillars, namely promoting MSME access to information, building MSME trade capacity, providing policy guidance, implementing the December 2020 package⁷⁶, and strengthening engagement with the private sector.

3.132. For the first pillar, the Group has worked to release a revamped version of the Trade4MSMEs platform on MSME Day 2023, including new country pages, improved search functionality, and updated visuals. Trade4MSMEs, which was launched in December 2021, is an online resource aggregating trade information for MSMEs and policymakers.

3.133. To build MSME trade capacity and promote inclusion, the MSME Group agreed to consider compendiums of good practices, such as on Authorized Economic Operators programmes, and decided to consolidate the Trade4MSMEs guides into handbooks.

3.134. Topics under discussion under the Policy Guidance pillar include MSME cyber readiness, encouraging adoption of UNCITRAL's model law on electronic transferable records (MLETR), fostering trade digitalization and supporting wider use of standards to advance trade digitalization, low-value shipments, sustainability, informality, and MSME provisions in regional trade agreements. Related to this final point, the MSME Group issued a call for academic papers on the impact of MSME provisions in regional trade agreements.

3.135. For the fourth pillar, implementation of the December 2020 package continued. During the first open-ended meeting in March, four members reported on their inclusion of, or intention to

⁷⁵ The European Union and its 27 member States are covered by the Agreement as one Party.

⁷⁶ WTO document INF/MSME/4/Rev.2, 6 October 2021.

include, MSME-related information in their 2023 TPRs and the Secretariat continues to update the database of MSME references in TPRs.

3.136. In line with the fifth pillar, communication with the private sector remained a priority for the Group. The Group held a third annual meeting with business representatives in April 2023 and documents continued to be received from the private sector under the INF/MSME/P document symbol. The Group, together with the International Trade Centre and the International Chamber of Commerce, also launched their third Small Business Champions competition with the theme "helping smallholder farmers go global". Open to chambers of commerce, industry associations, NGOs and small businesses, the initiative called for proposals aimed at supporting smallholder farmers to participate in international trade.

3.137. Launched by 88 WTO Members at MC11 in December 2017, membership of the MSME Informal Working Group increased to 98⁷⁷ in the first half of 2023, representing all levels of development and all regions of the world. The Group is open to all WTO Members. Participating Members account for around 90% of world exports.

3.138. The following box on the use of digital technologies in francophone Africa has been contributed by the International Trade Centre.

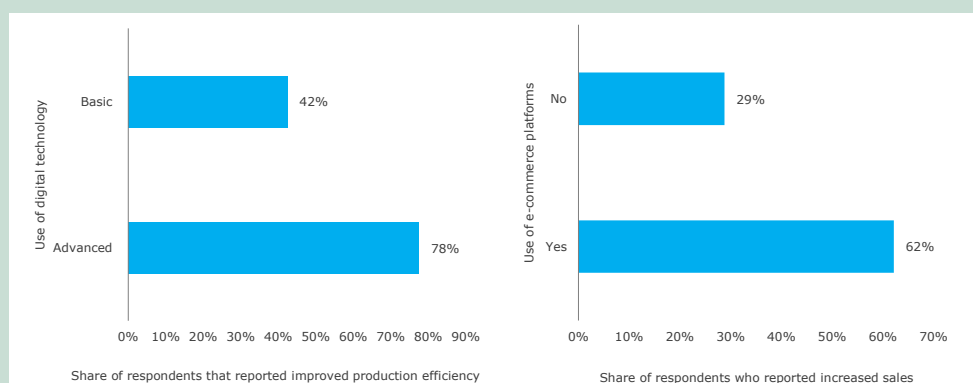
Box 3.8 Advanced digital technologies make businesses more efficient

The pandemic has spurred the use of digital technologies. COVID-19 highlighted how vital digital tools are for firm survival and resilience. But not all technologies serve the same purpose, and how they are used matters for firms' competitive advantage and growth.

A survey conducted in francophone Africa by the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the Permanent Conference of African and Francophone Consular Chambers (CPCCAF) shows that the use of digital technologies boosts profits.^a Four in every five surveyed businesses that used digital technologies said these helped them cut costs. Eighty-five percent also said these technologies helped them increase sales.^b

However, real efficiency and competitiveness gains come with integrated uses of more advanced digital tools. For instance, companies that adopted digital technologies such as cloud-based data storage, digital accounting and computerized inventory management were almost twice as likely to report improved production efficiency than firms that only used digital technologies for communication purposes, such as email or social media.^c Furthermore, firms that used e-commerce platforms were more than 30 percentage points more likely to say they experienced an increase in sales compared with firms that did not use e-commerce platforms.

Figure 1 Advanced use of digital technology and e-commerce create higher dividends^d



Source: ITC.

Firms that trade internationally get more value out of digital technologies in improving the efficiency and timeliness of delivery than businesses that do not trade.^e This is partially due to the fact that trading firms are larger, and therefore have more resources to invest in the latest technologies.^f At the other end of the spectrum, youth-led and informal businesses reported using digital tools mostly to connect to new customers.

Despite the advantages of advanced technologies, their adoption is still limited in francophone Africa. Only around a quarter of respondents said they used digital technologies for accounting, recordkeeping, and inventory management. Even fewer reported using these for more advanced purposes, such as cloud-based data storage, digital finance, and e-commerce platforms.^g

⁷⁷ In 2023, the United Arab Emirates formally joined the MSME Group.

Digital deepening requires removing basic obstacles and improving digital skills

Harnessing the potential of digital technologies requires removing persistent obstacles that hamper their use and adoption by businesses in francophone Africa. Among the obstacles most reported were poor Internet or network connection and the high cost of Internet service subscriptions.

Investing in better ICT infrastructure and increasing competition among network operators can play an important role in lowering some barriers to digitalization. Regulations underpinning the digital economy are the subject of domestic and international discussions. When closing regulatory gaps, governments should align with international best practice – as embodied in templates such as the Model Law on Electronic Commerce.^h This way they can avoid the kind of regulatory divergence that is so costly to small businesses.

The availability of digitally skilled employees is also key in making full and effective use of digital technologies. Over 9 in 10 surveyed firms believe they will need more employees with digital skills in the next 5 years. Building digital competency requires integrating basic digital literacy, such as word processing, email and use of keyboards and touchscreens, into education curricula.

Nonetheless, building skills is a long-term strategy, and might not provide solutions for companies in the short term. For this, governments need to facilitate labour movement across borders. They can enable businesses to recruit qualified individuals from abroad. Reducing barriers to temporary movement of people in a foreign market can open the door to importing needed expertise.ⁱ

In 2022, the ITC launched the Switch ON initiative, with the objective of supporting small businesses, as well as women-owned and youth-led enterprises, to develop the skills they need to digitalize. This initiative aims to help small businesses expand their online presence and use digital trade channels to access global markets. In parallel, ITC supports countries in developing and implementing supportive policy and strategies for digital readiness.

- a ITC and the CPCCAF surveyed 4,973 businesses in French-speaking Africa between May and August 2022. Data were gathered from companies in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Mali, Morocco, Togo, and Tunisia. For more information, see publication "SME Competitiveness in Francophone Africa 2022, Fostering digital transformation" (Geneva, Switzerland: ITC, November 2022), available at: <https://intracen.org/resources/publications/sme-competitiveness-in-francophone-africa-2022>.
- b ITC.
- c ITC.
- d The figure on the left describes the responses of businesses to two questions: "Do you use digital technologies for any of the following purposes?" and "What benefits do you gain from using digital technologies?" "Basic" firms are those that only chose "Communicate with customers (buyers) or suppliers through e-mail" and/or "Marketing and advertising through social media" to answer the first question. "Advanced" firms are those that reported using any other digital technologies (options included e.g. "g. Accounting, recordkeeping and inventory management"). In terms of benefits from using digital technologies, the focus is on the answer "b. Improved efficiency and timeliness of production". The figure on the right describes the responses of businesses to two questions: "Do you use digital technologies for any of the following purposes: e. Selling on e-commerce platforms or social marketplaces" and "What benefits do you gain from using digital technologies? g. Increased sales", for firms that reported using digital technologies.
- e ITC.
- f ITC, "SME Competitiveness Outlook 2022: Connected Services, Competitive Businesses" (Geneva, Switzerland: International Trade Centre, September 2022), available at: <https://intracen.org/resources/publications/sme-competitiveness-outlook-2022-connected-services-competitive-businesses>.
- g ITC.
- h UN ESCAP (2017), "Disaster risk transfer mechanisms: Issues and considerations for the Asia-Pacific region".
- i ITC, "SME Competitiveness Outlook 2022: Connected Services, Competitive Businesses" (Geneva, Switzerland: International Trade Centre, September 2022), available at: <https://intracen.org/resources/publications/sme-competitiveness-outlook-2022-connected-services-competitive-businesses>.

Source: International Trade Centre.

STEs and TRIMs

3.139. During the review period, six trade concerns were raised at the meeting of the Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMs)⁷⁸ Committee on 23 February 2023, on measures implemented by China (2), India (1) and Indonesia (3).

3.140. At the two meetings of the Working Party on State Trade Enterprises (STEs) on 21 October 2022 and 28 April 2023⁷⁹ that took place during the review period, 13 trade concerns were raised on STEs-related policies and measures by Australia (1), China (3), Costa Rica (1), India (2), New Zealand (1), Panama (1), the Russian Federation (2) and Thailand (2). At both meetings the low level of compliance with notification obligations was also raised.

⁷⁸ WTO document TRIMS/M/53, 3 April 2023.

⁷⁹ WTO documents G/STR/M/41, 22 December 2022 and G/STR/M/42 (forthcoming).

Trade and environment

3.141. At MC12, Ministers highlighted the importance of the Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) as a standing forum dedicated to dialogue on the relationship between trade measures and environmental measures. This gave new impetus to environment-related discussions in the WTO. During the review period, the CTE held two regular meetings and its third Trade and Environment Week⁸⁰ and continued to focus on important global issues, including the circular economy and plastics pollution, trade and climate change, and biodiversity. The March 2023 CTE meeting discussed how to revitalize the work of the CTE with inputs from China, Colombia, the European Union, India, and Paraguay.⁸¹

3.142. Some WTO Members continued their work through other platforms. For example, in October 2022, the first meeting of the Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform (FFSR⁸²) sought to phase out inefficient FFS, explore ways to increase transparency and fulfil long-term sustainability objectives. The Trade and Environmental Sustainability Structured Discussions (TESSD⁸³) held a high-level event in December 2022 to take stock of progress made and to signal priorities for further work ahead of MC13. In May 2023 the Dialogue on Plastics Pollution and Environmentally Sustainable Plastics Trade (DPP⁸⁴) introduced the coordinators' draft vision on the way forward and elements for a potential outcome at MC13.

3.143. In parallel, the WTO Secretariat also worked with various stakeholders, including the OECD (for the Inclusive Forum on Carbon Mitigation Approaches (IFCMA)), the World Bank and the World Economic Forum (jointly launching the "Action on Climate and Trade Initiative" (ACT) aiming to provide technical assistance and capacity-building for developing economies, including LDCs), and the steel industry (for the first WTO forum on decarbonization standards⁸⁵). During the review period, an important moment for water was attained as global leaders and key policy makers engaged in the UN Water Conference (UNWC).

3.144. The following box takes a closer look at the UN Water Conference 2023 and its main outcomes.

Box 3.9 UN Water Conference 2023 and the Global Commission on the Economics of Water

The [UN Water Conference](#) (UNWC) – co-hosted by the Netherlands and Tajikistan – in March 2023 marked an important moment for water. It was the first time in nearly 50 years (with the only previous UNWC held in 1977) that global leaders and key policy makers engaged on water.

For water, SDG 6 sets the benchmark and targets of clean water and sanitation for all. The 2023 UN World Water Development [Report](#) highlights the tasks at hand: 26% of the world's population, approximately 2 billion people, do not have access to safe drinking water, and 3.6 billion lack access to safe sanitation services.

One of the main outcomes from the UNWC was the [Water Action Agenda](#) with over 700 commitments from member States, IGOs, NGOs and other stakeholders. The WTO Director-General participated at the UNWC at the Plenary Interactive Dialogue on [Water for Sustainable Development](#) and in other special and high-level events.

The WTO Director-General also engaged with media and other stakeholders in her capacity as a co-chair of the [Global Commission on the Economics of Water](#). At the UNWC, the Commission published its preliminary findings with [Turning the Tide: A Call to Collective Action](#) as a basis for its final report to be published in May 2024.

Source: WTO Secretariat.

⁸⁰ Viewed at: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/envir_e/tedweek2022_e.htm.

⁸¹ Annual Report 2022, WTO document WT/CTE/29, 16 December 2022, and Minutes of the October 2022 and March 2023 CTE meetings in WTO documents WT/CTE/M/76, 6 March 2023, and WT/CTE/M/77 (forthcoming), respectively.

⁸² Viewed at: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/envir_e/fossil_fuel_e.htm.

⁸³ Viewed at: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tessd_e/tessd_e.htm.

⁸⁴ Viewed at: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/ppesp_e/ppesp_e.htm.

⁸⁵ Viewed at: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tbt_e/tbt_09032023_e/tbt_09032023_e.htm.

Trade facilitation

3.145. The Committee on Trade Facilitation met on two occasions during the period under review – November 2022 and March 2023. The current global rate of implementation commitments stands at 76%.

3.146. During the review period, the Committee received 20 notifications. The Committee continued to focus on addressing the gaps in the provision of identified needs for technical assistance and capacity-building support. There were also broader discussions on the wider ongoing implementation support, including from a regional perspective, as well as a look at avenues for further collaboration and cooperation delegations. The Committee welcomed the first experience-sharing by regional trade facilitation committees.

3.147. Discussions on MC12 Implementation Matters took place at both meetings covering improved functioning of the Committee and also the WTO response to the pandemic with a view to submitting a written report to the CTG before 30 November 2023 describing the discussions held and improvements introduced.

3.148. At the March 2023 meeting, the United States raised questions about Indonesia's Regulation 190/PMK.04/2022 of 14 December 2022, entitled "The Transfer of Self-Consumed Goods".⁸⁶ At the same meeting, and at the request of the United States, an informal session on the topic of disaster preparedness was held highlighting the challenges faced in moving humanitarian aid and relief supplies across international borders during times of disaster.

3.149. During the review period, the work of the Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility (TFAF) focused on the return to in-person activities, delivering its grant programme and demonstrating reinforced transparency procedures set out in its updated Framework⁸⁷ for management and operation agreed by Members in April 2022. The external evaluation of the Facility concluded at the end of 2022 has been discussed with Members to identify recommendations for action.

3.150. TFAF's 2023 workplan⁸⁸, drafted following procedures in its new management framework, was agreed by the TF Committee in October 2022 and identifies priorities and activities to be delivered throughout the year. Grants and *ad hoc* activities can be requested by Members at any time through the TFAF website.⁸⁹

3.151. Technical assistance activities included a regional trade facilitation workshop for the Pacific in Australia on 13-16 December 2022 organized with the World Bank Group and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS). A national workshop was organized at the request of the Maldives in cooperation with UNCTAD, the Asian Development Bank, and the WCO in Malé on 22-25 January 2023. An expression of interest from Malawi for a TFAF grant was matched with the World Bank Group, which plans to assist with the implementation of five provisions of the TFA. A project proposal grant is being prepared with Madagascar, to be launched by the end of the review period.

Trade financing

3.152. Multilateral development banks continued to receive excess demand for their trade finance facilitation programmes. For balance-of-payments-constrained countries, the increase in the value of imports, notably food and energy, has been stretching the capacity of local financial sectors to provide higher levels of trade finance. Moreover, access to foreign exchange, which is indispensable for issuing trade finance instruments, has been also a growing problem for countries experiencing external sector constraints. The supply of international trade finance was also negatively affected by the increase in country risk (political or economic risk) and by recent financial turbulence, which has a knock-on effect on inter-bank market conditions. As trade finance is mostly short term, its availability is particularly sensitive to inter-bank market conditions.

⁸⁶ WTO document G/TFA/Q/IDN/1, 20 March 2023.

⁸⁷ WTO document G/TFA/3, 5 April 2022.

⁸⁸ WTO document G/TFA/TFAF/2, 8 December 2022.

⁸⁹ Viewed at: <https://www.tfafacility.org/assistance-and-grants>.

Women's economic empowerment

3.153. Gender equality is becoming a significant component of WTO Members' trade strategies and policies as they increasingly recognize that women's economic empowerment is key for sustainable growth and poverty reduction. While in the past, WTO Members would simply integrate general objectives in support of women's economic empowerment in their trade policies, the period under review showed that many Members have been shifting towards affirming objectives of mainstreaming gender throughout their trade policies, programmes, and initiatives. Trade policies are also progressively acknowledging women's role in the economy and considering women as strategic economic agents that can foster trade growth and integration into the multilateral trading system.

3.154. Many Members have introduced export support programmes to help women entrepreneurs who are either exporting for the first time or to further expand their presence in international markets. Increasingly, policies include dedicated programmes for entrepreneurs to have access to finance and credit with advantageous conditions, for example in the form of medium- and long-term indirect credit lines or loan guarantees.

3.155. More broadly, trade policy initiatives to support MSMEs financially, although not specifically targeting women, can have a positive impact on them as many MSMEs are owned or led by women. Some trade policies also carve out preferences for female entrepreneurs to participate in government procurement bidding and some governments also support women entrepreneurs by defining their status using specific criteria, often in the form of a certification. This can represent an advantage for businesswomen in accessing trade opportunities.

3.156. In both agriculture and fisheries, support for women is widespread as some governments increase their support for female farmers using domestic support and green box subsidies. Some programmes include training, access to agricultural land, support in entering international markets and access to input subsidies and financial support. In contrast, even though most women work in the services sector, few policies, except for the tourism sector, specifically have so far addressed gender-related issues.

3.157. Challenges continue to exist in policy-making when it comes to supporting gender equality in trade. Governments face difficulties in collecting sex-disaggregated data in trade, which is crucial to develop informed trade policies. Similarly, most trade policies do not include an impact evaluation process or a monitoring exercise to review and understand their effects.

Developments in WTO Accessions' negotiations

3.158. The accession negotiations of [Comoros](#) and [Timor-Leste](#), both LDCs, advanced significantly over the review period and could be finalized in 2023 – in time for adoption of the respective accession packages before or at MC13. The lists of outstanding issues have been narrowed down in recent meetings of the respective accession Working Parties, especially regarding the legislative actions required to achieve WTO conformity. In the case of Comoros, the verified draft Schedule of Concessions and Commitments on Goods and the verified draft Schedule of Specific Commitments on Trade in Services were circulated to Members in early May 2023, which completed the market access track of the negotiations. More information on other ongoing accessions can be found [here](#).

3.159. Since its launch in 2021, the WTO's [Trade for Peace \(T4P\) Programme](#) was further consolidated and continued to deliver various [outreach](#), [research](#), [training](#) and [capacity-building](#) activities in the period under review. Highlights in the last quarter of 2022 include the [3rd edition of the T4P Week](#), exploring how to build peace through trade and economic integration particularly in fragile and conflict affected states (FCS), and the launch of the first [Interdisciplinary Master's course on T4P](#), delivered in collaboration with the Geneva Graduate Institute. In 2023, the T4P Programme has focused on its research pillar, where work has progressed on developing the first book fully dedicated to examining the trade-peace nexus.

4 POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN TRADE IN SERVICES

Regular measures affecting trade in services

4.1. During the review period, 74 new measures affecting trade in services were introduced. Half of these were horizontal measures targeting different modes of supply across various sectors. A significant number of measures relating to communications, ICT, or financial services' trade was recorded (11 and 13, respectively). Other measures affected business services, health, tourism and travel, and transport services. Overall, most of the measures were trade facilitating (for instance, in commercial presence and presence of natural persons), while some new policies appeared to be trade restrictive (measures affecting communication and network-enabled services and policies pertaining to the screening of foreign investment).

4.2. Annex 4 of the Addendum provides additional information on the 74 new services measures introduced by 42 WTO Members and 2 Observers.¹

Measures affecting supply through multiple modes of supply across various sectors

4.3. Brazil introduced a new law, effective on 30 December 2022, which notably calls for a greater amount of currency allowed when traveling abroad (USD 10,000), as well as lifting the reciprocity requirement for foreign banks to acquire more than 30% of shares with voting rights in Brazilian banks. Argentina established a new wealth tax levy of 25% for purchases and expenses abroad that exceed a limit of USD 300 per month with credit and debit cards. This duty is separate from and on top of new rules and tax rates for foreign currency purchases of goods and services overseas and is added to the increase from 35% to 45% regarding some purchases made abroad recently imposed by authorities.

Measures affecting supply through commercial presence across various sectors

4.4. Various governments introduced changes to their investment policies that affect the supply through commercial presence (mode 3) across various sectors. In Jordan, a new law published on 16 October 2022 provides for non-discriminatory treatment, freedom of capital transfer and investment guarantees and incentives. It specifies that foreigners can be hired in administrative and technical positions that require specialized skills, up to 25% of the workforce. It can be increased to 40% if skills are not available locally. The new law has not repealed the Non-Jordanian Investments Regulation No. 77 of 2016, which provided for ownership restrictions in certain activities. On 1 January 2023, China increased the number of sectors where foreign investment is encouraged. The list of sectors now covers modern services, such as recycling and processing services of retired wind turbine blades and waste photovoltaic modules, technical services (e.g. advanced system integration technology and service of low carbon, environmental protection, green energy saving and water saving), construction engineering, language services or elder care related services.

4.5. Several EU member States (Estonia, Romania, Slovak Republic, and Spain) introduced or revised their legislation aiming at scrutinizing direct and indirect investment by non-EU investors. In Estonia, the regime promulgated on 2 February 2023 will apply to 11 specific areas such as providers of vital services, state-controlled undertakings and providers of national television or radio broadcasting services. There are no size or value thresholds, and a transaction is automatically covered by the FDI regime if a non-EU investor acquires direct or indirect control, a qualifying holding, or a part of the target undertaking. Starting 29 March 2023, Slovak Republic introduced three screening procedures: obligatory screening, voluntary screening, and *ex officio* screening. All foreign investments may be screened when there is a reasonable presumption that they may threaten or disrupt security or public order, unlike the previous regime under which only investments into critical infrastructure were subject to screening procedures. Foreign investments falling under the category of critical investments should be made only after the approval of the Ministry of Economy. The list of critical investments is to be determined by separate legislation.

4.6. France's Directorate-General of the Treasury published new guidelines on the screening of foreign direct investments, bringing more transparency in the process. The guidelines explain how

¹ The inclusion of any measure in the Annex implies no judgement by the WTO Secretariat on whether or not such measure, or its intent, is protectionist in nature. Moreover, nothing in the Annex implies any judgement, either direct or indirect, on the consistency of any measure referred to with the provisions of any WTO agreement.

authorities interpret "sensitive activities", subject to review. The factors are assessed on a case-by-case basis, including target customers, applications of the products/services concerned, dangerousness and market substitutability. New R&D activities received particular attention. The guidelines also clarify that an activity can be considered sensitive regardless of the turnover generated in the market.

Measures related to communication services, e-commerce and digitally enabled services

4.7. A third of the measures reported affected trade in communications services, Internet- and other network-enabled services, or computer services. Nigeria issued a code of practice for interactive computer service platforms and Internet intermediaries (effective on December 2022), requiring that large digital platforms (over 1 million users in Nigeria) be incorporated in the country. The European Union's Digital Services Act (DSA) became effective on 16 November 2022. It applies to online intermediary services, which include cloud computing and webhosting services, intermediary services offering network infrastructure, online platforms bringing together sellers and consumers (e.g. app stores), and very large online platforms, as well as very large search engines reaching over 10% of the total EU population. The DSA includes new obligations on the traceability of business' users on online marketplaces, obligations for very large online platforms and search engines to prevent the misuse of systems, and transparency measures for all online platforms.

4.8. Kenya announced that in March 2023, foreign ICT companies were no longer required to relinquish 30% of their ownership to Kenyans, a requirement that had been established in 2020 in the National Information, Communications, and Technology (ICT) Policy, with a 3-year compliance requirement. In March 2023, Israel indicated that it would relax certain restrictions on ownership of equity in the incumbent supplier of local fixed-line services. Institutions will be allowed to own up to 7.5% of shares, compared to 5% previously. Ethiopia declared on 9 February 2023 that it will sell 45% of the capital of the public telecommunications operator.

4.9. The Russian Federation amended the Federal Law on Personal Data, requiring impact assessments and filings with the data protection authority as pre-conditions for cross-border personal data transfers. The amendments apply to any entity that intends to transfer personal data from the Russian Federation to an entity based in another jurisdiction (natural person, legal entity, or governmental body), whatever the nationality of data subjects. This is not required in the case of an adequacy decision concerning the destination country. Starting 27 March 2023, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia made further allowance for international data transfers, which no longer require approval if they are in implementation of obligations under international agreements to which the country is a party, if the transfer is made pursuant to a contract to which the data subject is a party.

Financial services

4.10. Several policy changes by 10 Members were introduced during the review period in the financial services sectors. For example, in January 2023, Mauritius introduced new rules regulating entities whose main activity is to provide Global Shared Services to a related entity providing financial services outside Mauritius. These should be incorporated in Mauritius, not hold other licences, authorization, registration, or approval except as approved by the Financial Services Commission, and not be engaged in the provision of any services or activities other than those specified in the Sixth Schedule of the Financial Services Act. On 7 February 2023, the Republic of Korea liberalized the onshore inter-bank foreign exchange market, allowing foreign financial institutions based abroad (with or without branches in the jurisdiction) to directly participate in this market, under condition of registration with Korean authorities.

4.11. The European Union adopted on 28 November 2022 the Digital Operational Resilience Act (DORA), which affects not only trade in financial services, but also the supply of third-party trade in ICT-related services to the financial sector. DORA sets rules for monitoring risks related to outsourced tasks and requires the outsourcing arrangements to comply with certain requirements (e.g. access to, recovery and return of data; services levels). Under DORA, the supervisory authorities for the financial sector can directly supervise ICT third-party service providers that are themselves not engaged in regulated activities but deemed by the authorities to be "critical" to financial entities.

Other services sectors

4.12. New policies were also adopted with respect to transport services. Bangladesh adopted a new ordinance on 5 February 2023 requiring that an exemption certificate be applied for the transportation of goods by any ship other than Bangladesh-flagged ships and that the grant and revocation of such certificate be subject to the opinion of the state-owned Shipping Corporation and the Bangladesh Flag Ship Owner's Association. The ordinance notably establishes requirements on the composition of the crew if a foreign ship licensed with an exemption certificate to transport exclusively commercial goods of Bangladesh in coastal areas: if for a period of 3 months and less than one year, then the total manpower of the said ship shall be at least 50% recruited from among Bangladeshi officers and sailors; for more than one year it shall be a 100%. From 20 November 2022, a new law came into effect in Egypt establishing the River Transport Authority (RTA) qualified to apply the laws regulating the internal navigation, marinas and mooring in inland waters. The RTA can grant public utility concessions to investors to build, manage, operate, or maintain ports, docks, and moorings on the Nile. The concession period cannot be less than 5 years or exceed 15 years, and must be permitted by the Cabinet of Ministers, and the Ministry of Defence must approve the port's location.

4.13. With respect to legal services, effective on 1 November 2022, a new category of incorporated law firms was established in Japan, namely, joint corporations, comprising both Japanese qualified attorneys at law and registered foreign lawyers as members. While the latter remain limited to providing services related to foreign law, joint corporations can now establish branches throughout Japan, when it was only possible to have one office under previous foreign law joint enterprise arrangements. In India, new rules, effective on 10 March 2023, enable foreign lawyers and law firms to provide services in the country, under reciprocal conditions. The areas of practice for foreign lawyers/law firms are yet to be laid down by the Bar Council of India. The scope of practice will be limited to advisory services in foreign law, international law, international commercial arbitration, transactional work/corporate work such as joint ventures, mergers and acquisitions, IP matters, drafting of contracts and other related matters. Foreign service suppliers will only be permitted to advise foreign persons/entities on the laws of the country in which they have qualified but will be allowed to represent foreign entities in international arbitrations conducted in India, regardless of the involvement of foreign law in such arbitration.

4.14. Some measures were also adopted in the tourism sector. For example, in Costa Rica, an amendment to the Regulation of the Law of marinas and tourist berths, effective on 31 October 2022, established that a foreign vessel that uses the services of a marina or tourist berth in Costa Rica may remain in the country for two extendable years. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as of 25 March 2023, a foreign hotel operator willing to operate in the Kingdom is required to establish a licensed legal entity, notably by obtaining a foreign investment licence and commercial registration certificate.

Services supplied through the movement of natural persons

4.15. Most of the measures affecting the supply of services through the movement of natural persons implemented during the review period were trade-facilitating. For example, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia extended on 8 November 2022 the maximum duration of stay for all categories of single-entry visit visas from one month to three months. On 1 April 2023, Finland expanded the eligibility for its D visa to those in managerial positions and their families, which will result in a faster entry process. Mozambique launched on 5 December 2022 an e-Visa platform, *inter alia*, for crew, sport and culture, and business visas. The online system allows applicants to apply for visas directly and upload required documents, with a response provided within five business days.

4.16. Some measures affecting the supply of services were restrictive, such as in Paraguay, which requires foreign nationals working on short-term assignments to obtain a Short-term Residence Permit, which is valid for up to 90 days (renewable once), compared to the previous permit allowing work for up to 6 months. However, the duration of the temporary residence status has been increased to two years (renewable for the same period), up from the previous one-year duration.

Trade concerns raised in the Council for Trade in Services

4.17. At the meetings of the Council for Trade in Services (CTS) held on 14 October 2022², 8 December 2022³ and 9 March 2023⁴, concerns were reiterated about (i) cybersecurity measures of China and Viet Nam (raised by Japan and United States); (ii) 5G-related measures of Australia (raised by China); (iii) measures of the United States regarding Chinese services and service suppliers (raised by China); and (iv) measures of India regarding Chinese services and service suppliers (raised by China).

Air services agreements

4.18. Table 4.1 presents information on air services agreements (ASAs) concluded or amended during the period under review. These include both new ASAs and revisions of existing ones. As far as can be assessed from available sources, these ASAs provide for improved access conditions than was previously the case. All are bilateral ASAs, with the notable exception of the ASEAN-EU agreement.

Table 4.1 Air transport agreements⁵ concluded or amended between October 2022 and May 2023

Parties		Date of signature	Source
Barbados	Qatar	29/09/2022	<i>Barbados Today</i> , "Barbados signs air services agreement with Government of Qatar" https://barbadostoday.bb/2022/09/29/barbados-signs-air-services-agreement-with-government-of-qatar/
Belize	Qatar	01/10/2022	<i>Breaking Belize News</i> , "Qatar and Belize sign air services agreement" https://www.breakingbelizenews.com/2022/10/01/qatar-and-belize-sign-air-services-agreement/
Ethiopia	Chad	01/10/2022	2merkato.com, "Ethiopia Signs Aviation Agreements with Chad and Turkey" https://www.2merkato.com/news/alerts/6783-ethiopia-signs-aviation-agreements-with-chad-and-turkey
Singapore	Palau	03/10/2022	<i>The Straits Times</i> , "Singapore signs open skies agreement with Palau" https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/singapore-signs-open-skies-agreement-with-palau
Seychelles	Kazakhstan	03/10/2022	<i>Seychelles News Agency</i> , "Seychelles signs air service agreement with Kazakhstan" http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/17504/Seychelles+signs+air+service+agreement+with+Kazakhstan
Tonga	United Arab Emirates	10/10/2022	<i>Matangi Tonga Online</i> , "Tonga signs Air Services Agreement with United Arab Emirates" https://matangitonga.to/2022/10/10/tonga-signs-air-services-agreement-united-arab-emirates
Guyana	China	13/10/2022	<i>Caribbean National Weekly</i> , "Guyana signs air agreement with China" https://www.caribbeannationalweekly.com/news/caribbean-news/guyana-signs-air-agreement-with-china/
ASEAN	European Union	17/10/2022	<i>The Business Times</i> , "Comprehensive air transport pact inked between Asean and European Union, Government and Economy" https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/government-economy/comprehensive-air-transport-pact-inked-between-asean-and-european-union
Serbia	Türkiye	19/10/2022	<i>EX-YU Aviation News</i> , "Serbia - Turkey reach deal on new routes, frequencies and capacity" https://www.exyuaviation.com/2022/10/serbia-turkey-reach-deal-on-new-routes.html

² WTO document S/C/M/150, 14 November 2022.

³ WTO document S/C/M/151, 31 January 2023.

⁴ WTO document S/C/M/152, 18 April 2023.

⁵ The term "Air Transport Agreements" is used here to refer to Air Services Agreements, Memoranda of Understanding, Exchange of Notes, and other such relevant instruments.

Parties		Date of signature	Source
Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of	Finland	02/11/2022	<i>Arabian Business</i> , "Saudi Arabia, Finland sign pact to provide air services between the two countries" https://www.arabianbusiness.com/industries/transport/saudi-arabia-finland-sign-pact-to-provide-air-services-between-the-two-countries
Bahrain, Kingdom of	Bosnia and Herzegovina	09/11/2022	<i>Sarajevo Times</i> , "Kingdom of Bahrain and BiH sign the Agreement on Services in Air Transport" https://sarajevotimes.com/kingdom-of-bahrain-and-bih-sign-the-agreement-on-services-in-air-transport/
Barbados	Rwanda	11/11/2022	<i>St Kitts Nevis Observer</i> , "Barbados and Rwanda Cement Closer Ties" https://www.thestkittsnevisobserver.com/barbados-and-rwanda-cement-closer-ties/
Canada	India	15/11/2022	<i>Aviation Week</i> , "Canada, India Expand Air Services Agreement" https://aviationweek.com/air-transport/airports-networks/canada-india-expand-air-services-agreement-0
United States	Ecuador	17/11/2022	U.S. Department of State, "United States and Ecuador Sign Open Skies Agreement" https://www.state.gov/united-states-and-ecuador-sign-open-skies-agreement/
Barbados	Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of	29/11/2022	<i>Loop News</i> , "Barbados, Saudi Arabia sign air services agreement" https://barbados.loopnews.com/content/barbados-saudi-arabia-sign-air-services-agreement
Nigeria	Seychelles	09/12/2022	<i>Daily Trust</i> , "Nigeria, Seychelles sign BASA on direct flights" https://dailytrust.com/nigeria-seychelles-sign-basa-on-direct-flights/
Bangladesh	Rwanda	12/01/2023	MENAFN, "BD, Rwanda Ink Bilateral Air Services Agreement" https://menafn.com/1105431666/BD-Rwanda-Ink-Bilateral-Air-Services-Agreement
Qatar	Saint Lucia	16/01/2023	MENAFN, "Qatar and Saint Lucia Sign Air Services Agreement" https://menafn.com/1105435490/Qatar-And-Saint-Lucia-Sign-Air-Services-Agreement
Canada	Dominican Republic	03/02/2023	Simple Flying, "Canada Signs Open Skies Agreement With Dominican Republic" https://simpleflying.com/canada-open-skies-agreement-dominican-republic/
Montenegro	Azerbaijan	06/02/2023	<i>See News</i> , "Montenegro signs air service agreement with Azerbaijan – report" https://seenews.com/news/montenegro-signs-air-service-agreement-with-azerbaijan-report-813638
European Union	Japan	20/02/2023	Council of the European Union, "External aviation policy: EU signs agreement boosting air services with Japan" https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/02/20/external-aviation-policy-eu-signs-agreement-boosting-air-services-with-japan/
Guyana	India	22/02/2023	<i>Loop News</i> , "Air Services Agreement between Guyana and India approved for signing" https://caribbean.loopnews.com/content/air-services-agreement-between-guyana-and-india-approved-signing
Sri Lanka	Netherlands	22/02/2023	<i>Ada Derana Business</i> , "Sri Lanka signs Air Services Agreement with the Netherlands" http://bizenglish.adaderana.lk/sri-lanka-signs-air-services-agreement-with-the-netherlands/
Ghana	Sao Tome and Principe	08/03/2023	<i>Graphic Online</i> , "Ghana, Sao Tome and Principe sign air traffic agreement" https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/ghana-news-ghana-sao-tome-and-principe-sign-air-traffic-agreement.html
Philippines	Türkiye	05/04/2023	<i>Malaya Business Insight</i> , "PH, Türkiye improve air services agreement" https://malaya.com.ph/news_business/ph-turkiye-improve-air-services-agreement/

Parties		Date of signature	Source
Canada	United Arab Emirates	05/04/2023	<i>Mirage News</i> , "Canada-UAE Air Transport Agreement Expanded for More Flights" https://www.miragenews.com/canada-uae-air-transport-agreement-expanded-for-981899/
Dominican Republic	Brazil	14/04/2023	<i>Dominican Today</i> , "Dominican Republic and Brazil update air transport agreement protocol" https://dominantoday.com/dr/world/2023/04/14/dominican-republic-and-brazil-update-air-transport-agreement-protocol/
India	Guyana	20/04/2023	<i>The Economic Times</i> , "India, Guyana sign Air Services Agreement to allow easier travel between the nations" https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/airlines/-aviation/india-guyana-sign-air-services-agreement-to-allow-easier-travel-between-the-nations/articleshow/99711161.cms

Source: WTO Secretariat.

COVID-19-related measures affecting trade in services⁶

4.19. During the review period, no new COVID-19-related measures affecting trade in services were reported. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the Secretariat has collected information on 156 COVID-19-related measures affecting trade in services introduced by Members and Observers. Only one Member, New Zealand, reported the termination of a COVID-19-related measure affecting trade in services (i.e. conclusion of the scheme to secure regional connectivity and ensure that critical air services could continue through disruptions from COVID-19, and which helped rebuild international reconnections and economic recovery).

4.20. Twenty-two measures in total were reported as terminated over the past three years. The full list of measures compiled since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic is available on the WTO website.⁷

⁶ The information in this Section was compiled by the WTO Secretariat and is an informal situation report and an attempt to provide transparency with respect to measures affecting trade in services taken in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. It does not pass judgement on or question the right of WTO Members to take such actions. The Secretariat has not sought to determine or indicate whether the measures listed in the trade in services COVID-19-related measures on the WTO website have trade-restrictive or trade-facilitating effects. The information is not exhaustive and does not include information on general support measures relating to services. Further, the objective is not to list all COVID-19-related measures taken by governments around the world to limit movement, nor all the measures taken to ease the impact of border restrictions or other limits on movement.

⁷ Viewed at: https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/covid19_e/trade_related_services_measure_e.htm.

5 POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN TRADE IN INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

5.1. During the review period, WTO Members continued to refine and upgrade their intellectual property (IP) regimes in response to technological and economic developments. Namibia deposited its instrument of acceptance of the Protocol Amending the TRIPS Agreement in April 2023.

5.2. While many pandemic-related measures have been phased out, some Members have formalized the utilization of online procedures created during lockdowns. Several Members continued to apply war-related financial measures that can have an effect on the acquisition and management of IP rights. Türkiye implemented measures for IP holders in the regions affected by the earthquakes.

5.3. The MC12 TRIPS Decision on COVID-19 Vaccines¹ was adopted in June 2022. Since then, Members have discussed the possible extension to COVID-19 diagnostics and therapeutics.

COVID-19-related measures

5.4. The pace of implementation of specific measures related to COVID-19 health technologies slowed down. Some Members extended the duration of the availability of online procedures for registration and management of IP rights while others phased out such measures. Other Members, like Chile, incorporated the use of online forms for submissions into their procedures.

Developments in the context of the war in Ukraine

5.5. Several Members continue to apply a wide range of financial measures to designated nationals (e.g. legal or natural persons) that cover both tangible and intangible assets, like IP rights. These measures might indirectly affect the maintenance and licensing of intellectual property rights (IPRs).²

Emergency-related measures

5.6. Türkiye extended the administrative deadlines for IP right holders and applicants from the provinces affected by the earthquakes.³

National IP-related strategies

5.7. Albania established the interagency working group to monitor and implement its National IP Strategy 2022–2025.⁴ Table 5.1 provides domestic legislation and administrative developments that took place during the review period.

Table 5.1 Domestic legislation and administrative developments

Member	Measure
Chile	The National Intellectual Property Institute updated its appraisal fees, mandated the use of the online form for submissions for trademark oppositions, and set the fees in the framework of the Madrid Protocol, between November 2022 and June 2023. ^a
China	The National Copyright Administration issued 7 pre-warning lists of key works for copyright protection, covering a total of 38 works, including 6 theatrical films involving overseas rights holders, as of October 2022. ^b
Hong Kong, China	The Copyright (Amendment) Bill 2022 was passed by the Legislative Council in December 2022 to strengthen protection in the digital environment. It came into force in May 2023. ^c
Montenegro	Amendments to the Law on Trademarks and to the Law on Patents entered into force in January 2023. ^d
Myanmar	The Law on Trademarks came into force in April 2023, and the IP Central Committee was reorganized in February 2023.

¹ WTO document WT/MIN(22)/30, 22 June 2022.

² Viewed at, for example: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2021C00330>.

³ Communication by Türkiye to the Trade Monitoring Report.

⁴ Communication by Albania to the Trade Monitoring Report.

Member	Measure
Nigeria	The new Copyright Act was signed into Law in March 2022. ^e
Norway	The new Customs Act and Regulations on the Movement of Goods were updated enforcement provisions that encompass: (i) interventions by customs authorities on transit shipments if the contents are protected by IP rights in Norway; and (ii) small consignments containing online purchases can be intercepted and detained by customs with a simplified procedure for seizure and destruction. ^f
Chinese Taipei	The enforcement rules contained in the Patent Act were amended in October 2022. ^g
Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of	The National Intellectual Property Strategy was launched in December 2022; the compulsory licensing service for copyright works was launched in November 2022; and implemented enforcement campaigns in March 2023. ^h
Ukraine	The functions of the National Intellectual Property Authority were updated in November 2022; the Law on Geographical Indications for Spirits came partially into force in December 2022; and the Law on Copyright and Related Rights came into force in January 2023.

a Communication by Chile to the Trade Monitoring Report.

b Communication by China to the Trade Monitoring Report.

c Communication by Hong Kong, China to the Trade Monitoring Report.

d Communication by Montenegro to the Trade Monitoring Report.

e Viewed at: [Nigeria Passes New Copyright Act 2022 \(wipo.int\)](https://www.wipo.int/pressroom/2022/01/nigeria-passes-new-copyright-act-2022).

f Communication by Norway to the Trade Monitoring Report.

g Communication by Chinese Taipei to the Trade Monitoring Report; and notifications to the TRIPS Council, WTO document IP/N/1/TPKM/36, IP/N/1/TPKM/P/18, 2 December 2022.

h Communication by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Trade Monitoring Report.

Source: WTO Secretariat.

TRIPS Council

5.8. During the review period, the TRIPS Council met twice formally (October 2022 and March 2023) and several times in informal mode. Discussions focused on the possible extension of the MC12 TRIPS Decision on COVID-19 Vaccines⁵ to diagnostics and therapeutics. The Council's transparency function showed valuable progress and practical engagement, with 198 notifications on a diverse array of new and revised IP laws. Members shared their national experiences and extensive information on their domestic experiences on "Role of IP to raise Finance for Start-Ups" and "Cross-border Cooperation among IP Offices". Detailed discussions on incentives for the transfer of technology for LDCs with a view to attaining the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals took place in a dedicated Workshop, back-to-back with the meeting in March.

⁵ WTO document WT/MIN(22)/30, 22 June 2022.