



# WTO CHAIRS PROGRAMME REGIONAL CONFERENCE ASIA-AFRICA

**FOSTERING RESILIENT AND RESPONSIBLE TRADE  
FOR CHANGING GLOBAL ORDER**

**27 AND 28 SEPTEMBER 2024  
NEW DELHI**



## World Trade Organization (WTO) Chairs Programme (WCP)

The World Trade Organization (WTO) Chairs Programme (WCP) is an initiative by WTO to improve understanding of international trade, especially in developing countries. It supports the research, education, and outreach activities by WCP Chairs (usually either universities and research institutions). WCP helps build expertise in these institutions and connect academicians, policymakers, and practitioners for better trade policymaking. By creating a global network, WCP fosters knowledge sharing and strengthens the role of academia in international trade.



## Centre for Trade and Investment Law (CTIL)

The Centre for Trade and Investment Law (CTIL) is a prestigious institution established in 2016 under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India. It serves as a hub for research, policy analysis, and capacity-building activities in international trade and investment law. CTIL conducts research, provides analytical input to the Government of India for trade negotiations, and contributes to the development of India's trade and investment policies. It also collaborates with international organisations and academic institutions to promote a deeper understanding of trade and investment laws.



## Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT)

The Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) was established in 1963 to enhance India's external trade sector. It has evolved into a prestigious institution dedicated to education and research in international business and trade. In 2002, it received Deemed to be University status and was recognised as a Grade A Institution by NAAC in 2005 and 2015. IIFT focuses on International Business Management and received AACSB Accreditation in 2021, placing it among the top Business Schools globally.



## Centre for WTO Studies (CWTOS)

The Centre for WTO Studies, established in 1999, serves as a repository of knowledge and documentation related to WTO negotiations. It aims to become a research unit focusing on trade and the WTO, eventually evolving into an independent think tank. The Centre, located at the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade since 2002, conducts research, publishes papers, and maintains an e-repository of important WTO documents related to India. It provides research and analytical inputs to the Indian government for trade negotiations and facilitates interaction between industry, government, and other stakeholders through outreach and capacity-building programs.



# ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The World Trade Organization (WTO) Chairs Programme (WCP) India Chair is organising WCP Regional Conference for Asian and African Chairs on “Fostering Resilient and Responsible Trade for a Changing Global Order” on 27 and 28 September 2024 in New Delhi, India.

The conference aims to foster an informed and evidence-based debate on international trade, investment, international economic law, and other related issues, specifically pertaining to the Asian and African regions. The event will provide a forum for collaboration as well as exchange of knowledge among scholars, policymakers, and WTO Chairs in the region.

## *Conference Theme*

The theme of the conference, “Fostering Resilient and Responsible Trade for a Changing Global Order”, highlights the need for adjusting trade practices in a world undergoing significant transformations.

The theme focuses on establishing resilient trade systems that can withstand disruptions by diversifying trading partners and fortifying supply chains. It also emphasises the importance of ensuring trade practices are ethical and sustainable adhering to fair-trade principles.

The theme acknowledges a shift in the traditional global order dominated by a few powerful countries, suggesting that trade must adapt to new emerging power centres and regional trade blocs.

## *Conference Objectives*

The conference objectives are to:

- foster an informed and evidence-based debate on international trade, investment, international economic law, and other related issues, specifically pertaining to the Asia and Africa;
- provide a forum for collaboration between the WCP regional Chairs and exchange of knowledge among scholars, policymakers, and WTO Chairs in the region;
- identify challenges and opportunities in promoting resilient and responsible trade practices in the region;
- share best practices and build regional cooperation among trade experts; and
- enhance cooperation among WTO Chairs in the region and contribute to the development of resilient and responsible trade practices.



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## Target Audience

The conference is designed for:

- WCP regional Chairs;
- Scholars, policymakers, and WTO Chairs from Asia and Africa;
- Government officials;
- Academicians and professionals;
- Students and young professionals;
- Civil society organisations and NGOs; and
- International organisations and multilateral agencies.

## Conference Highlights

- keynote addresses by renowned experts and thought leaders;
- panel discussions and interactive sessions on critical trade issues;
- country-specific and regional perspectives on trade challenges and opportunities;
- networking opportunities with stakeholders from diverse backgrounds; and
- closed roundtable discussion for WTO Chairs from Asia and Africa to enhance cooperation and contribute regionally to the **WTO's** mission.

## Join the Conversation

Join us at the WCP Regional Conference for Asian and African Chairs on “**Fostering** Resilient and Responsible Trade for a Changing Global **Order**” to be a part of the critical conversation shaping the future of international trading system.



# SESSIONS

## *Regional aspects in International Trade Law: Exploring the Intersection of Global Norms and Regional Realities*

This panel will explore the intersection of global norms and regional realities in shaping international trade law. Regional organisations and institutions are playing a crucial role in addressing global challenges, and their approaches are influencing the global legal landscape. The discussion highlights the importance of regional approaches in promoting cooperation among countries and addressing regional challenges.

The panel will also attempt to address the shift towards regional and bilateral trade agreements, such as IPEF, AfCFTA, RCEP, and CPTPP, which are forming new trade rules at the regional level. The discussion aims to explore the challenges and opportunities presented by the intersection of global norms and regional realities, including ensuring coherence and consistency, addressing fragmentation, and promoting cooperation and coordination. The panel seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the complex nature of regional aspects in international trade law.

## *Critical Minerals for a Clean Energy Future: What is next for Africa and Asia*

The world is undergoing an energy transition, driven by the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate climate change. Critical minerals such as copper, lithium, and rare earth elements are essential for this transition. Africa and Asia have significant potential to contribute to the global critical mineral supply chain. Africa is rich in critical mineral resources, and the African Continental Free Trade Area could play a key role in enhancing infrastructure and creating regional value chains. Asia, particularly Southeast Asia, is home to substantial natural reserves of critical minerals.

However, several key challenges must be addressed, including streamlining bureaucratic processes, minimising environmental impacts, and ensuring responsible mining practices. International collaboration is also crucial to balance global supply and demand for critical minerals. The panel discussion aims to explore how Africa and Asia can balance the need to develop their critical mineral resources with the need to minimise environmental impacts and ensure a just transition. It also seeks to identify opportunities for collaboration and growth in the clean energy transition, and to provide a comprehensive understanding of the critical mineral landscape in Africa and Asia.



# SESSIONS

## *Green Industrial Policies and Trade Tension: Navigating the challenges of a net zero economy*

This panel will explore the interface of green subsidy programs with international trade agreements, options for international cooperation, and the role of international organisations in advancing technical and political deliberations. The session will focus on the regional aspects of green industrial policies and trade tensions in Africa and Asia. The goal is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intersection of green industrial policies and trade tensions and identify opportunities for international cooperation to achieve a just transition to net zero.

## *Sustainable Climate Actions and Just Transitions: ensuring inclusivity and justice in the face of climate action*

This session will explore the critical facets of climate action, focusing on inclusivity and justice. The discussion will centre on the regional aspects of sustainable climate actions and just transition in developing countries and least-developed countries (LDCs), which face significant challenges in growing sustainably while meeting their developmental needs. The session will address key challenges, including inadequate institutional capacity, limited access to finance, and climate technology gaps in developing countries.

The panel will aim to explore questions such as the challenges facing developing countries in implementing climate change mitigation strategies, the role of robust support mechanisms in ensuring a just transition, and opportunities for promoting inclusivity and justice in climate actions. The goal is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the importance of inclusivity and justice in climate actions and identify opportunities for sustainable and equitable development in the face of climate emergency.

## *Agriculture Trade, Climate Change and Sustainability: striking a balance between green transition and inclusivity*

The session will explore the challenges facing the global agriculture sector, including food insecurity, poverty, climate change, and sustainability. The discussion will focus on striking a balance between green transitions in agriculture trade and facilitating inclusivity for smallholders to ensure food security, livelihood security, and address climate change. The session will also examine the regional aspects of agriculture trade, climate change, and sustainability in developing countries, and discuss how trade rules can be made compatible with their socio-economic situations.

The panel will aim to explore questions such as how to repurpose agriculture subsidies to promote sustainability, overcome obstacles in WTO agriculture negotiations, and design trade rules to ensure food security and livelihood security in developing countries. The goal is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationships between agriculture trade, climate change, and sustainability, and identify opportunities for striking a balance between green transitions and inclusivity in agriculture trade.



# SESSIONS

## *Transforming Trade, Transforming Lives: Inclusive Digital Transformation for Inclusive and Sustainable Development*

The session will explore the challenges and opportunities concerning the utilization of emerging technologies for achieving sustainable development goals and promoting resilient and responsible trade. The rapid transformation in technology has fundamentally altered the functioning of society, including economies, governance, and socio-aspects. However, the growth of digital technology has also highlighted deep inequities within society, particularly in terms of the data and innovation divide.

The session will discuss how States can promote inclusive digital transformation, including through responsible governance and, the creation and deployment of digital public infrastructure, aimed at reducing inequities in society. In this regard, the sessions will explore the role of the WTO and other multilateral forums in promoting inclusive digital transformation. It will also explore the impact of interdisciplinary actors, such as Intellectual Property Protection, and Anti-Trust laws in promoting inclusive digital transformation. The session will bring together experts and stakeholders to share their experiences and insights on how to foster inclusive digital transformation and promote resilient and responsible trade in the changing global order.

## ***Can WTO's Crown Jewel be protected?: Exploring alternative dispute settlement mechanisms for a changing global order***

The session will discuss the challenges facing the World Trade Organization's (WTO) dispute settlement system, often referred to as the "Crown Jewel" of the multilateral trading system. The system is facing unprecedented challenges, including the Appellate Body crisis, rise of protectionism, and lack of consensus among members to revive the WTO dispute mechanism.

The session will also explore ways to protect and strengthen the system, with a focus on the challenges faced by developing countries and least-developed countries (LDCs). It will also examine the shift towards bilateral and plurilateral dispute resolution mechanisms under free trade agreements (FTAs) as a potential alternative to the WTO's dispute settlement system.

The panel will aim to explore questions such as how to reform and modernise the system, promote fair trade practices, and prevent trade wars. The goal is to provide a deeper understanding of the complex issues at play and identify potential solutions to protect and strengthen the system, particularly for developing countries and LDCs.



# POLICY BRIEF SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

We are delighted to invite submissions for Policy Briefs for this conference on the theme “Fostering Resilient and Responsible Trade for a Changing Global Order”, particularly on the session themes. The objective of the policy brief is to provide context for panel discussions and foster exchange of ideas from different stakeholders, groups, and region.

- The policy brief must address a specific economic policy question, either pertaining to a specific country or to a group of countries in the region.
- The policy brief must be concise and focused document that reports and analyses current problems or challenges, offering policy recommendations to promote the transformation from research to policy.
- The policy brief must go beyond a diagnosis or analysis of a particular situation or a problem to the verification of alternative policy options with a view to making specific policy recommendations based on available research.
- The Policy Brief should be structured with a Background, Analysis, and Policy Implications section.
  - The Background section should introduce the topic, summarise the existing literature, and the issue under discussion.
  - The Analysis section should contain the body of the brief and may be broken into subsections with short, informative headings. This section should ideally cover a brief description of the policy question, merit/demerits of the policy, the necessity for such policy, and challenges or shortcomings.
  - The Policy Implications section should state clearly the main policy suggestions or recommendations together with detailed follow-up interpretations.
- All **authors’** must submit a declaration <attach link to declaration template> along with the brief.





# POLICY BRIEF SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- The guidelines for submission of policy brief are as follows:
  - Times New Roman font size 12, endnotes (no footnotes), and a uniform citation style.
  - The title page should list the full names and institutional addresses for all authors.
  - The Abstract should not exceed 200 words and should be structured with Background, Analysis, and Policy Implications. Please minimise the use of abbreviations and do not cite references in the abstract.
  - Three to five keywords representing the main content of the brief should be provided.
  - A list of abbreviations should be included if abbreviations are used in the text.
  - The Policy Brief should not exceed 2000 words and may include a figure or table.
- **The deadline for submission is 16 September 2024.**
- The author will be required to present the policy brief during the Conference in the subject-matter related session and a discussant will provide feedback/comment on the policy brief.
- Based on these Policy Briefs and comments received during the conference, the authors will have the opportunity to submit a detailed research paper (between 6000-8000 words) by mid-2025 which will be published in a reputed journal, subject to **publication's** peer review process and papers meeting **publishers'** requirements and guidelines.

We look forward to receiving your Policy Briefs and engaging in stimulating discussions on fostering resilient and responsible trade for a changing global order.





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