



Gender and Trade in the Americas

Mexico, Barbados and Chile

WTO Chairs Programme
Capacity Building Projects
2021

Introduction

Through its Chairs Programme, the World Trade Organization (WTO) is fostering research, training and outreach activities of relevance to governmental policy makers and other stakeholders at universities in developing countries and least developing countries (LDCs).

In 2021, a special call was made to the Chairs of the 1st and 2nd phases inviting them to submit research proposals for projects focused on the following themes:

- COVID -19 and Global Value Chains: Keeping Global Markets Open
- Promoting Economic Recovery through Trade in a post COVID-19 World
- Towards a Sustainable and Greener Trade: Trade Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture in the context of the Blue Economy, Trade and Climate Change
- E-Commerce and the Digital Economy
- Inclusive Trade: Micro, Small, Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs), Women and Trade

With support from the WCP donors, 12 Chairs from universities in Argentina, Brazil, Barbados, Chile, China, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco and Turkey received funding.

Project Background

Women face higher obstacles to trade than men, through legal prohibitions to economic participation, discrimination in the granting of finance, the persisting gender digital divide, and knowledge gaps in trade and trade rules.¹ International trade provides a major opportunity to improve the livelihoods of women in the Americas as it generates economic growth, employment and improved wages.

In 2021, three WTO Chairs from Mexico, Barbados and Chile collaborated on the Gender and Trade in the Americas project to enhance knowledge and awareness of the role of women in trade.

Project Activities

The projects activities were carried out in line with the WCPs three pillars - research, outreach and curriculum development. Over the course of the year the Chairs conducted training courses, edited a book and issues a special Journal on Trade and Gender in the Americas.



Training Course

This training course took place from November to December 2021 and provided an overview of the relationship between trade and women, from a policy and legal perspective.

Three modules were taught which:

- introduced participants to concepts and definitions of feminism, gender and gender policies
- provided an overview of the numbers and impact of trade on women from economic, social and political perspectives

- reviewed how gender is being mainstreamed into WTO members' policies through international, regional and bilateral trade and investment agreements
- evaluated trends relating to the participation of women in specific sectors
- highlighted ways in which regional and international organizations are promoting the women and trade agenda.

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Modules were conducted on:

- Linkages between Trade and Women
- Gender Provisions in Trade and Investment Agreements
- Current Challenges and Global Trends (with respect to and women issues)

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Students from Barbados, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominica, Grenada, Kenya, Mexico, Senegal, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago registered for the training sessions

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graduated with a certificate of participation

[Access the courses here](#)



Webinar

A series of webinars were held online analyzing the role of women in international trade, the main challenges faced, and ways to enhance their participation in a sector dominated by men.

These seminars were developed with a multidisciplinary focus, and civil servants, academics, NGO's and representatives from the private sector were invited to participate.

“ We must respond to what we signed in the Declaration of Buenos Aires, where we committed to eliminating obstacles to women's access to international trade and promoting their empowerment. ”

- Deputy Director-General Anabel González

¹ Women and Trade. WTO.org, https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/mc12_e/briefing_notes_e/bfjwomen_and_trade_e.htm

Five sessions were held focused on the areas below:

- the contributions and main challenges of international organizations on the issue of gender and trade, as well as the reality of trade agreements on this matter
- the impact of COVID-19 on the economic autonomy of women in Latin America and the Caribbean
- international trade policies and how they can empower women and promote gender equality
- assessing the perspective of the Americas in gender mainstreaming

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participants took part in the webinars on zoom or Facebook live

“Foreign trade can open up new opportunities for the empowerment of women, creating markets for their products and providing formal employment. For this reason, it is essential to open the discussion on gender gaps in global value chains and to identify the challenges they face.”

-Rodrigo Yáñez, Undersecretary of International Economic Relations of Chile

“Being able to internationalize and participate in foreign trade and in global value chains makes you have more sustainable companies which are better prepared to survive in national and foreign markets.”

-Luz María de la Mora, Undersecretary of Foreign Trade of Mexico



Special Journal Issue on Gender and Trade

The Latin American Journal of Trade Policy in collaboration with the Chairs published a thematic issue journal focused on gender and trade.

Some of the papers and articles included in the journal were:

- Making Trade Agreements Work for Women Empowerment: How Does It Help, What Has Been Done, and What Remains Undone? - Amrita Bahri
- Impacto económico de la brecha de género en Asia Pacífico: el caso de Filipinas. - Agustina Nacimiento

- Gender impact of Interregional trade: the case of EU-Mercosur relations. - Carolina Pavese
- ¿Los acuerdos comerciales diversifican las exportaciones? El caso chileno. - Iván Nicolás Da Ponte
- Negotiating Trade in Services with China from the Uruguayan Perspective. - Ignacio Bartesaghi, Gabriel Gari & Natalia Melgar

Access the journal [here](#)



Handbook on Trade Policy and Gender Equality

This book will offer a comprehensive academic study of the intersections between trade and gender. It will be divided into three parts titled:

- **WTO and Gender** - this is focused on the institutional role the WTO can play in advancing the trade and gender agenda.
- **Gender and Trade Negotiations** - this section covers all gender-issues related to trade agreements, both in substantive terms as well as in terms of the negotiation process.
- **Regional Approaches** - this section includes country- or region-specific case studies on different trade policy and gender mainstreaming approaches.

Actual and Expected Impact from the Project



Enhanced understanding of women and their role in trade

Students who took part in the training course indicated that it enhanced their understanding of the :

- different roles played by women and men in the economy, and its repercussions on countries' trade performance
- linkages between trade and women, and the relevance of mainstreaming gender in trade and investment policies
- role of trade in improving the living conditions of women
- diversity of trade and women's policies across the Americas
- gender provisions in trade and investment agreements and their effectiveness
- pandemic and how it impacted women and men differently
- opportunities available to women in the digital economy



Networking and Dialogue

The panelists in the course had the opportunity to network with a variety of stakeholders and highlighted that these new contacts would be vital in continuing discussions on gender and trade in their respective circles.

The training course participants stated that this type of comparative review across the Americas was a useful way of generating new types of conversations with new stakeholders. It is also providing a model of research and training on the topic of gender and trade beyond the national scope.



Publication of the Handbook on Trade Policy and Gender Equality

The handbook is expected to:

- enhance readers knowledge and understanding of the relationship between trade and gender with a focus on the role of women in the economy, and how gender-responsive and gender-inclusive trade agreements can be an instrument for international cooperation within the existing multilateral trading system
- provide an overview of how all substantive areas of trade policy and trade cooperation can advance inclusive trade and gender policy considerations
- provide current analysis of trade negotiations and concluded trade agreements

The WTO 12th Ministerial Conference

The WTO 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) delivered a historical package - the `Geneva Package` of outcomes on topics which are important to the multilateral trading system.

The “Geneva package” adopted by members includes:

- a Ministerial Declaration on the Emergency Response to Food Insecurity
- a Ministerial Decision on World Food Programme (WFP) Food Purchases Exemptions from Export Prohibitions or Restrictions
- a Ministerial Declaration on the WTO Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Preparedness for Future Pandemics
- a Ministerial Decision on the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
- a Decision on the E-commerce Moratorium and Work Programme
- an Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies

In addition, ministers adopted two decisions - on the Work Programme on Small Economies and on the TRIPS non-violation and situation complaints — and a Sanitary and Phytosanitary Declaration for the Twelfth WTO Ministerial Conference: Responding to Modern SPS Challenges. ²

For more information on the MC12 visit [WTO.org](https://www.wto.org).

Additional Documents

- [Trade and gender co-chairs affirm commitment to gender equality in trade at MC12](#)
- [Women and Trade](#)
- [WTO launches new database compiling over 100 studies on gender equality in trade](#)

The Sustainable Development Goals

This project addresses the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



² Ministerial Conferences. *WTO.org*, https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/minist_e.htm