



## World Trade Organization (WTO)

Referred to as the only intergovernmental organization dedicated to regulating and simplifying trade amongst nations, the World Trade Organization (WTO) first began operating in 1995 (WTO, n.d.). Being the finalization of eight years of trade negotiations called the Uruguay Round, it was handled by signatories of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). These signatories aimed to generate an organization able to manage and regulate trade in a globalized economy by creating the WTO (Anderson, 2022).

GATT, created from the Bretton Woods System in 1947, was a legal agreement that sought to reduce and eliminate several trading barriers such as quotas and tariffs. However, while providing functional rules for international trade, GATT was missing a system that could implement rules and conciliate trade conflicts between States. Likewise, the signatories had concerns regarding GATT's inability to encompass trade in services and intellectual property, which was a growing percentage of global trade during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Due to the aforementioned, the Uruguay Round was set in motion by GATT in 1986. With the culmination of these negotiations, the WTO ended up being formed, which both enveloped GATT and branched the multilateral trade system off into new ranges (WTO, n.d.).

As for the composition of the WTO per se, it is divided into five main categories: trade negotiations, implementation and monitoring, dispute settlement, building trade capacity, and outreach (WTO, n.d.). WTO Member States have been able to utilize trade negotiations as a way to reach agreements and settle disputes targeted at liberalizing trade in goods, services, and intellectual property (Van der Meulen, 2014). Member governments have the responsibility of demonstrating evidence of the implementation of these agreements to the WTO councils charged with supervising their concurrence. In the situation where a member State accuses another of violating agreements, a WTO-appointed, independent expert is tasked with settling the dispute by judging all aspects of the situation (WTO, n.d.).

Lastly, the WTO includes unique resources for developing countries to build trade capacity in trade agreements. For instance, it offers educational courses for government officials and support third-party investments for said developing countries. The WTO also runs outreach activities with Non-Governmental Organizations, politicians, and other international organizations, as well as Public Relation activities (WTO, n.d.).





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