

Background and Rationale

The World Trade Organization (WTO) remains one of the world's most important global public goods, underpinning a stable, predictable, and rules-based trading system that has helped create jobs, reduce poverty, and support economic growth across nations.

Yet the limited outcomes of the WTO's Fourteenth Biennial Ministerial Conference in Cameroon underscored the growing strains on multilateralism and the increasing difficulty of achieving consensus among members.

The world cannot afford a weakened WTO. Its erosion would disproportionately harm developing countries, small businesses, farmers, workers, and vulnerable communities that depend on fair and predictable trade rules to participate in the global economy.

At the same time, rising protectionism, precautionism, and the proliferation of bilateral and regional trade agreements are fragmenting global trade, making it harder for smaller producers to compete and increasing the risk of inequality and exclusion.

In response, CUTS International has launched Friends of TRaNJIA, an initiative that seeks to place people at the heart of trade policy. By capturing real stories of opportunity, disruption, and resilience, Friends of TRaNJIA will help ensure that future trade reforms are more inclusive, balanced, and responsive to the needs of citizens.

Goal

To increase policymaker support for a stronger, more inclusive WTO by sharing real-world experiences of people who benefit from trade and those who face challenges, reinforcing rules-based trade as a global public good.

Objectives

- **Show the Value of the WTO**
Demonstrate how rules-based trade drives growth, jobs, consumer welfare, and poverty reduction.
- **Address Trade Disruptions**
Highlight the challenges faced by those adversely affected by trade distortions and identify practical pathways for adjustment and inclusion.
- **Advance the Three-Pillar Agenda**
Promote governance, fairness, and future-ready policies for the digital economy, climate action, and the green transition.
- **Amplify Voices from the Ground**
Bridge grassroots communities and global policymakers, ensuring local experiences inform global decisions.
- **Empower Key Stakeholders**
Equip consumers, small business units, farmers, workers, and civil society with the knowledge and tools to engage effectively in trade policy.



Approach and Methodology

TRaNJIA applies the CUTS RANC framework

- Research, Awareness, Networking, and Capacity Building. To turn community experiences into policy influence.

Micro-Level: Community Engagement

- Grassroots engagement through case studies, multilingual toolkits, workshops, consultations, and

audio-visual resources across different regions of the world to capture and amplify how trade impacts diverse communities and stakeholders.

Macro-Level: Policy Engagement

- Policy-ready outputs such as briefs, papers, op-eds, multimedia, and high-level dialogues with diplomats, policymakers, and experts.

Bridging Micro & Macro

- Creates a two-way flow where community realities shape global discourse, while strengthening public understanding of the WTO and the multilateral trading system.

Call to Action

The future of trade cannot be shaped by governments alone. It must reflect the lived experiences of workers, farmers, entrepreneurs, consumers, and communities directly affected by global markets. Through a strategic dissemination strategy, Friends of TRaNJIA seeks to amplify these voices and foster informed dialogue across all levels of society. We call on governments, international organisations, businesses, academia, civil society, and grassroots stakeholders to help build a more inclusive, resilient, and responsive multilateral trading system. Together, we can strengthen public confidence in trade, multilateralism and the WTO, ensuring its benefits are more widely understood, fairly shared, and sustainably realised.

Beyond trade, a stronger and more trusted multilateral system can generate positive spillover effects in addressing other global challenges; from climate change and sustainable development to geopolitical tensions and border conflicts, where cooperation, dialogue, and collective action are indispensable.

By rebuilding trust in trade and multilateral cooperation, Friends of TRaNJIA aims to contribute to a more peaceful, prosperous, sustainable, and interconnected world.

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For more:

<https://cuts-citee.org/trade-not-just-aid-winners-and-losers-of-the-wto-tranja>



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Trade, Not Just Aid

Winners and Losers of the WTO (TRANJA)



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