



## **The Road to the World Trade Organisation (WTO)’s Twelfth Ministerial Conference (MC12)**

Since the last meeting of the General Council (GC) of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in late February, the Ukraine conflict has taken centre stage in international affairs. The WTO has not remained unaffected. Spillovers of the political tensions have adversely affected progress on trade negotiations inside the WTO.

The conflict has also brought renewed attention to the risks of a global food security crisis, as production and trade of foodgrain and fertilisers has been impaired by the crisis in Ukraine. International organisations have ramped up their coordination efforts to assist countries which may fall prey to food insecurity. There have been positive developments at the WTO relating to agricultural trade – the endorsement by the GC of the Bali Tariff Rate Quota (TRQ) “underfill” mechanism, innovative approaches to agricultural trade facilitation, overall progress in meetings of the Committee on Agriculture – and these will help to ensure greater predictability and stability in global agricultural trade.

In a welcome announcement, the Eighth Global Review of Aid for Trade will be held in late July 2022. This will be yet another opportunity for the WTO membership to rededicate themselves towards strategies for enhancing the participation of developing and least-developed countries in international trade.

On the TRIPS waiver COVID-19 solution, while there has been some breakthrough among four key WTO Members, there is still no clear path forward for the entire WTO membership to adopt a comprehensive pandemic response package.

The Twelfth WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12) is scheduled to take place from 12-15 June at the WTO headquarters in Geneva. With less than two months to go, there will be frenetic activity inside the WTO to close some negotiations and offer some deliverables – particularly on fisheries subsidies, agriculture and pandemic response.

This edition of CUTS Occasional News Wrap (ONW) captures news and developments at the WTO and perspectives on trade-related issues. This ONW is categorised into two sections:

- News & developments at the WTO
- Perspectives on trade issues

## News & developments at the WTO

1.	<p><i>Greater international cooperation needed on subsidies data, analysis and reform</i></p> <p><b>World Trade Organisation</b> April 22, 2022</p>	<p><a href="#">Greater international cooperation</a> is needed to improve information and analysis on subsidies and their impact, which would in turn inform efforts to strengthen subsidies disciplines and reduce trade frictions arising from their use.</p>
2.	<p><i>World Bank, IMF, WFP and WTO call for urgent coordinated action on food security</i></p> <p><b>World Trade Organisation</b> April 13, 2022</p>	<p>The heads of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) and the WTO issued a <a href="#">joint statement</a> urging coordinated action to help vulnerable countries address growing threats to food security.</p>
3.	<p><i>WTO-WEF publication looks at policy approaches to harness “TradeTech” potential</i></p> <p><b>World Trade Organisation</b> April 12, 2022</p>	<p>The set of technologies known as “<a href="#">TradeTech</a>” promises more efficient, inclusive and sustainable trade in the future, but there is an urgent need for policymaking to keep pace with developments in the field to realize its full potential.</p>
4.	<p><i>Global Review of Aid for Trade to take place in late July</i></p> <p><b>World Trade Organisation</b> April 11, 2022</p>	<p>The <a href="#">Eighth Global Review of Aid for Trade</a> will take place from 27 to 29 July, with the theme of “Empowering Connected, Sustainable Trade”.</p>
5.	<p><i>Members advance work to improve transparency in import licensing procedures</i></p> <p><b>World Trade Organisation</b> April 08, 2022</p>	<p>As part of overall efforts to improve transparency, WTO members advanced work to ensure that <a href="#">import licensing procedures</a> remain simple, straightforward and predictable.</p>
6.	<p><i>Members welcome COVID-19 trade-related measures report, agree on future experience sharing</i></p> <p><b>World Trade Organisation</b> March 31, 2022</p>	<p>Members welcomed the latest <a href="#">update</a> on export restrictions and prohibitions and trade-easing measures relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, which was presented by the WTO Secretariat.</p>
7.	<p><i>Members launch discussions under trade and environmental sustainability work plan for 2022</i></p> <p><b>World Trade Organisation</b> March 31, 2022</p>	<p>WTO members taking part in the Trade and Environmental Sustainability Structured Discussions (TESSD) met on 31 March to initiate discussions on a variety of topics as part of their agreed <a href="#">2022 work plan</a>.</p>

8.	<p><i>Members continue push to commence Appellate Body appointment process</i></p> <p><b>World Trade Organisation</b></p> <p>March 28, 2022</p>	<p>At a <a href="#">meeting</a> of the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) on 28 March, a large group of members continued their push to start the process for filling vacancies on the WTO's Appellate Body, arguing that continued delay was damaging to the interests of members and to the multilateral trading system as a whole.</p>
9.	<p><i>Members explore innovative approaches to facilitate food safety, trade opportunities</i></p> <p><b>World Trade Organisation</b></p> <p>March 25, 2022</p>	<p>At a meeting of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures on 23-25 March 2022, WTO members <a href="#">explored</a> innovative approaches to facilitate the flow of agricultural goods across borders, while ensuring that food is safe for consumers.</p>
10.	<p><i>Director-General Okonjo-Iweala hails breakthrough on TRIPS COVID-19 solution</i></p> <p><b>World Trade Organisation</b></p> <p>March 16, 2022</p>	<p>World Trade Organization Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala today warmly <a href="#">welcomed</a> the breakthrough among four WTO Members on a waiver of the Trade Related Intellectual Property agreement for the production of vaccines against the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>

### Perspectives on trade issues

1.	<p><i>Terms of Trade   Multilateralism vs mercantilism: Our agri trade policy dilemma</i></p> <p>Roshan Kishore</p> <p><b>Hindustan Times</b></p> <p>April 22, 2022</p>	<p>No amount of trade reciprocation will placate the agri-business lobby in advanced countries to allow India to continue its <a href="#">agricultural support</a> and mercantilism at the same time. Unless India builds an alliance with others in the Global South</p>
2.	<p><i>Foreign trade policy: Why the extension of the foreign trade policy could help enhance cross border trade</i></p> <p>Pushkar Mukewar</p> <p><b>The Economic Times</b></p> <p>April 05, 2022</p>	<p>The time is ripe for a detailed <a href="#">re-evaluation</a> of existing export policies and the proactive charting of the course of export growth. The exporter community looks towards the upcoming FTP to strengthen the provisions of the RoDTEP scheme, bolster the research and development ecosystem, expand the ambit of digitization to cover necessary trade procedures and promote e-commerce facilities, among others.</p>

3.	<p><i>India's zinc-trade deficit with Korea tells why we need industry input on deals</i></p> <p>Arpita Mukherjee, Ramneet Goswami</p> <p><b>Livemint</b></p> <p>April 05, 2022</p>	<p>Past trade agreements <a href="#">show</a> that imports of certain raw materials and intermediate goods rose significantly after India signed these trade pacts, leading to a large deficit in the trade of select products for which India has ample domestic manufacturing capabilities.</p>
4.	<p><i>Indo-Israel Ties: The promised land is a land of Opportunity for India</i></p> <p>Shariq Khan</p> <p><b>The Economic Times</b></p> <p>April 05, 2022</p>	<p>Given that Israel has made impressive strides in trade, commerce, innovation and technology, India stands to gain a lot from the country. Both the nations already have an excellent level of trade <a href="#">complementarity</a>.</p>
5.	<p><i>India, Australia in a geo-economic partnership</i></p> <p>Anil Wadhwa</p> <p><b>The Hindu Business Line</b></p> <p>April 05, 2022</p>	<p>The current trend of geo-economics <a href="#">favours</a> enhancement of investment and trade relationships with reliable partners. The Comprehensive Strategic partnership between India and Australia announced in June 2020 along with agreements on providing mutual logistics access and enhancing defence and security cooperation provided a spurt to their ties.</p>
6.	<p><i>In Trade, China Has a Sharp Edge Over India, and Sharp Things Can Be Weaponized</i></p> <p>Krzysztof Iwanek</p> <p><b>The Diplomat</b></p> <p>March 28, 2022</p>	<p>For India, it is a <a href="#">choice</a> between cheaper products for its citizens and companies or more security for the nation as a whole. It is not an Indian boycott of Chinese goods that would be a real challenge for New Delhi, but Beijing's blocking of exports to India.</p>
7.	<p><i>India export import: Lack of standardisation, quick export-import processes leaving India behind in technology manufacturing race</i></p> <p>Garima Bora</p> <p><b>The Economic Times</b></p> <p>March 24, 2022</p>	<p>In the last two years, the pandemic has <a href="#">fuelled</a> the need for self-sustenance and further de-globalisation of production networks in order to reduce industry-level vulnerabilities. At the same time, it has also laid bare India's piecemeal approach in increasing its meager contribution to the Global Value Chains.</p>
8.	<p><i>Why India needs to approach its free trade agreements with an open mind</i></p> <p>Minesh Pore</p> <p><b>The Economic Times</b></p> <p>March 19, 2022</p>	<p>Growing pushback from the EU and several other key markets against Chinese dominance has <a href="#">opened</a> a rare window of opportunity for countries like India to step up and take share of exports away from China. Within India, an emerging consensus is for competing effectively with China by aggressively pursuing FTAs of her own.</p>