



REPORT (2022) OF THE WORKING GROUP ON TRADE AND TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Ministers agreed, at the Fourth Ministerial Conference in Doha in November 2001, to "an examination, in a Working Group under the auspices of the General Council, of the relationship between trade and transfer of technology, and of any possible recommendations on steps that might be taken within the mandate of the WTO to increase flows of technology to developing countries".¹ The Working Group has reported on its work at each WTO Ministerial Meeting, at which the Ministers had reaffirmed their commitment to advance the work of the Working Group on Trade and Transfer of Technology and instructed the General Council to further report to the Ministerial Sessions.

1.2. The Working Group held two sessions during 2022, in May and in November. The reports on the meetings are contained in documents WT/WGTTT/M/67 and WT/WGTTT/M/68.² At these meetings, Members continued the analysis of the relationship between trade and transfer of technology, as well as considered any possible recommendations on steps that might be taken within the mandate of the WTO to increase flows of technology to developing countries, the details of which are given below.

1.3. At the May 2022 meeting, the Working Group formally elected Ambassador Luis Chuquihua Chil of Peru as its Chairperson.

2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRADE AND TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY

2.1. During the year 2022, work on the analysis of the relationship between trade and transfer of technology continued. At the May 2022 meeting, Brazil presented its communication titled "Intellectual property, transfer of technology and capacity building for COVID-19 and beyond" (WT/GC/W/845), which had been initially presented at the General Council meeting held on 9-10 May 2022. In its presentation, the Delegation of Brazil noted the role transfer of technology and know-how had played to create capacities to respond to COVID-19; and it underscored that such capacities could be leveraged to tackle other health emergencies, including those that are endemic to developing countries and which continued to constitute a major cause of loss of productivity and aggravated poverty. Members supported the communication's broad objective and invited Brazil to provide additional specific proposals in that regard.

2.2. At the November 2022 meeting and at the invitation of the Chairperson, experts from the Delegations of Argentina, Peru and Senegal and also experts from the Food and Agriculture Organization, the Standards and Trade Development Facility, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the World Economic Forum, the World Health Organization, the World Intellectual Property Organization and the World Trade Organization shared their perspectives on technology transfer to help the Working Group improve understanding on the relationship between trade and transfer of technology. The presentations were structured in three panel discussions which focused on the following themes: i. framework for technology transfer; ii. technology transfer applied to SPS measure; and iii. technology transfer to promote access and innovation in a pandemic context.

2.3. Presentations made noted that technology transfer has been a collaborative process encompassing knowledge, skills and know-how, that it involved several actors including

¹ Paragraph 37 of document WT/MIN(01)/DEC/1.

² Document WT/WGTTT/M/68 to be issued.

governments, academia, and industries; and that technology transfer had been providing a powerful tool to narrow the technological gap between developed and developing countries, and for integrating developing countries into the multilateral trading system. There was also convergence among speakers on the fact that technology transfer took place when there was a business interest and a capacity of partners to create, transfer and absorb knowledge. And, that participation in global value chains boosted technology diffusion by increasing market access and importing intermediates.

2.4. Members found the presentations relevant and agreed that technology transfer remains a key determinant of economic growth and welfare. The discussions that ensued highlighted several challenges, *inter alia*, scarce skilled workers, lack of infrastructure and availability of raw materials, trade and regulatory barriers, and disrupted supply chains. In terms of recommendations, the discussions revolved around the importance of public-private partnerships, infrastructure readiness, regional cooperation and financial sustainability.

3 ANY POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE STEPS THAT MIGHT BE TAKEN WITHIN THE MANDATE OF THE WTO TO INCREASE FLOWS OF TECHNOLOGY TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

3.1. Under the agenda item on possible recommendations that the Working Group could make in the future, no substantive discussion took place. The Chairperson reiterated the importance of a formal submission by the proponents of a submission made in 2008 by India, Pakistan and the Philippines - entitled "Facilitating Access to Information on Appropriate Technology Sourcing – A Step to Increase Flows of Technology to Developing Countries". The proponents informed the Working Group that they had been working with interested Members on revising their submission and that they intended to provide updates in the near future.

3.2. The least developed countries (LDC) Group underscored the critical role technology played in increasing productivity and output, and to diversify economies to better integrate into the regional and global value chains and level up their development. It also noted that advancing work to assist LDCs develop had been necessary and had become imperative because of persistent COVID-19 socio-economic impacts, aggravated by food security concerns induced by geopolitical tensions.

4 FUTURE WORK

4.1. Members have continued their examination of the relationship between trade and transfer of technology and possible recommendations that might be made within the mandate of the WTO to increase flows of technology to developing countries. The ongoing work has covered a number of issues and has helped to enhance Members' understanding of the nexus between trade and transfer of technology. The Working Group will continue to look at these issues in the coming year.
