



**JOINT STATEMENT ON PROMOTING INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE TRADE THROUGH  
GENDER EQUALITY AND BUILDING A GENDER-RESPONSIVE WTO BY THE CO-CHAIRS  
OF THE INFORMAL WORKING GROUP ON TRADE AND GENDER**

THIRTEENTH WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

The following statement, dated 13 February 2024, is being circulated on behalf of Cabo Verde, El Salvador and the United Kingdom.

1. We affirm that Women's Economic Empowerment is essential to sustainable development, GDP growth, poverty reduction and trade expansion;
2. We recall the Statement on Inclusive Trade and Gender Equality from the Co-Chairs of the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender ([WT/MIN\(22\)/7](#)), released at the WTO 12th Ministerial Conference on 12 June 2022;
3. We recall that gender equality is at the centre of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and are central to achieving the United Nations 2030 Agenda to finding solutions to worldwide challenges, while recognizing that women may face additional challenges and disproportionate barriers, particularly of unpaid care and domestic work, to participate and to fully benefit from international trade;
4. We recognize that multiple global crises have undermined the likelihood of many developing countries and LDCs to achieve the SDG by 2030;
5. We reaffirm that a systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is crucial;
6. We believe that the WTO, trade and gender-responsive trade policies play a significant role in achieving this agenda, and especially in realising Sustainable Development Goal 5 (on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls), in line with the objectives of the WTO, as stipulated in its preamble;
7. We acknowledge that the work of the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender is rooted in the following three documents:
  - 7.1. The Interim Report following the Buenos Aires Joint Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment establishing the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender in the WTO ([WT/L/1095/Rev.1](#)), 25 September 2020;
  - 7.2. Statement on Inclusive Trade and Gender Equality from the Co-Chairs of the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender ([WT/MIN\(22\)/7](#)), 12 June 2022;
  - 7.3. MC12 Outcome Document, Paragraph 13 ([WT/MIN\(22\)/24 WT/L/1135](#)), 22 June 2022.

8. We recall the four work pillars of the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender as described in [WT/L/1095/Rev.1](#), including sharing best practice and experience on trade policies promoting women's economic empowerment, mainstreaming gender in the WTO, reviewing research and enhancing the integration of gender in Aid for Trade;

9. We acknowledge that 130 WTO Members (representing 80% of the WTO membership) and seven Government Observers participate in the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender;

10. We recall the Rolling Work Plan of the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender 2023-2024 ([INF/TGE/W/6](#)) issued on 6 June 2023;

11. We recognize the role of the WTO Secretariat and in particular of the WTO Trade and Gender Unit in supporting and facilitating Members' work on trade and gender, including the technical assistance provided and we encourage WTO delegates involved in developing, negotiating and implementing trade policies at the WTO to upskill themselves on these issues;

12. The Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender established in 2020 ([WT/L/1095/Rev1.](#)) provides a solid platform in supporting WTO Members in making trade work for women and fostering growth and development through women's increased engagement in trade and economic empowerment;

13. In particular, through our work, we have:

13.1. Increased WTO Members' capacities to develop gender-responsive policies;

13.2. Focused our technical work on essential issues pertaining to trade and gender such as gender-sensitive data collection methods and models, market access supporting measures for women entrepreneurs, gender-responsive trade policies and free trade agreements;

13.3. Started to explore the links between WTO agreements/negotiations and gender equality;

13.4. Established new collaborative work with the MSME Group and Trade and Environmental Structured Discussions (TESSD);

13.5. Created new connections with key external stakeholders (including women entrepreneurs and business leaders) and other international organizations working on gender equality such as: UN Women, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and United Nations Economic Commission for Europe /UNECE), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), World Bank (WB) and United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), benefiting from their research and field experience;

13.6. Promoted existing relations with trade related organizations such as ITC (International Trade Centre) through its various SheTrades Initiatives and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

14. Based on these achievements, as Co-Chairs, we are resolutely determined to continue and intensify our work on trade and gender with the support of the Members of the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender, including through the following actions:

14.1. Carry on the implementation of the Rolling Work Plan 2023-2024 with a practical approach and facilitating collaborative work between WTO Members;

14.2. Continue establishing synergies with other groups and regular committees in the WTO, in a crosscutting manner, and further enhance work on Aid for Trade, to facilitate gender mainstreaming in the WTO;

14.3. Engage our respective governments to include our trade policies supporting women economic empowerment in our future trade policy review reports, setting best practice, and encourage other Members to do the same as part of their own trade policy review;

14.4. Foster and broker a substantive outcome on gender equality, ahead of or at the 14<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference (MC14), that contributes to promoting gender equality in trade and mainstream gender in Members' trade policies, practices and negotiations. This substantive outcome will include *inter alia*:

14.4.1. Sharing experiences on gender-responsive policies in achieving sustainable socioeconomic development and the promotion of inclusive economic growth;

14.4.2. Specific initiatives and tools Members could utilise in adopting/strengthening gender-responsive policies.

14.5. Promote the inclusion of specific gender dispositions or chapters in bilateral or plurilateral trade agreements;

14.6. Continue to work with Members and international organisations to review, develop and improve national and/or regional gender-disaggregated data collection and analysis, to inform gender-responsive policies;

14.7. Provide opportunities to engage and consult with external stakeholders such as women-led/owned businesses and entrepreneurs, business networks, civil society and women's rights organisations on issues pertaining to trade and gender equality;

14.8. Continue to share research initiatives to inform trade policy instruments and programmes to support women's economic empowerment and increase their participation and leadership in international trade to promote gender equality.

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