

# WTO MC11: Inject fresh momentum for trade and development

8 DECEMBER 2017



**In times of significant challenges for the world trading system and rising protectionism, companies worldwide are waiting impatiently for governments to show leadership and allow the World Trade Organisation to deliver. To give new impetus to the multilateral trading system, the undersigned organisations call upon the WTO members to:**

1. Safeguard the WTO system: Ensure that it stays the guardian of the trade rulebook

The Dispute Settlement Understanding of the WTO is one of the most important pillars of the organisation since it ensures the enforcement of multilateral trade rules in an independent manner. We call on all Member States of the WTO to support the proper functioning of the system in order to preserve a rules-based trading system.

2. Progress on agriculture and fisheries subsidies: Support LDCs and fight hunger

In order to show that the WTO can continue to deliver tangible benefits, states should conclude the talks on agriculture (especially on trade-distorting support) and take a more ambitious approach to fisheries subsidies. This would also help least-developed countries (LDCs) fight hunger as per Goal 2 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), where states agreed, amongst other things, to “correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets”.

3. Show that WTO can deliver: Take account of new trade environment

Business works on tight timeframes, and has real difficulty engaging with an organisation which cannot deliver results in a reasonable time. This is particularly crucial for small businesses, who lack the resources to deal with the many barriers to trading across the world. Today, global value chains and digitalisation have created new trade realities requiring new multilateral governance. Therefore, we call on governments to start working on additional issues, preferably on the multilateral or, if not achievable, on a plurilateral basis. They should adopt an ambitious work programme on issues of crucial importance for business:

- Services: For many years, services have been a growing, and in many countries a dominant, part of the economy, yet the WTO has made little progress on disciplines since the Uruguay Round; the WTO should look again at launching meaningful negotiation in this area.
- E-commerce, digital trade and new technologies: New forms of global trade need to be better reflected in WTO trade rules.
- ‘Servicification’ of world trade: removing barriers for provision of cross-border services, including services which are incorporated in goods.
- Trade and sustainable development: many studies have shown that trade leads to economic growth which drives sustainable development.
- Investment and competition: Facilitating investment through focus on WTO cross-cutting and new issues.

**We are convinced that by delivering on the above points, the WTO can show its determination and capacity to address the current and future challenges of world trade and provide the necessary multilateral authority and governance to do so in an effective and equitable manner.**

**SIGNATORIES:**

**American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA)**

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AAFA is the national trade association representing apparel, footwear and other sewn products companies, and their suppliers, which compete in the global market. Representing more than 1,000 world famous name brands, retailers, and manufacturers — AAFA is the trusted public policy and political voice of the apparel and footwear industry, its management and shareholders, its nearly four million U.S. workers, and its contribution of \$384 billion in annual U.S. retail sales. AAFA provides exclusive

expertise in supply chain management, trade policy, and brand protection, to help our members navigate the complex regulatory environment and lower costs. Members gain unparalleled access to information and exclusive insights on regulation and policy, and premier opportunities for networking and collaboration.

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#### **Supermarkets, Department and Specialized Stores Association of Mexico (ANTAD)**

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ANTAD gathers Supermarket, Department and Specialized Chain Stores (+ 106 retail chains, +50,000 stores, 53% of retail sales) in Mexico. ANTAD is a service organization that represents the legitimate interests of its Associates and promotes the development of retailers and their suppliers in an open market economy with social responsibility.

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#### **Chinese Taipei Paper industry Association (CTPIA)**

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CTPIA was established with twenty member mills in September 1947. With Taiwan's economic development, member mills increased year by year and got to the highest level at 168 member mills in 1980. There are a total of 77 member mills currently. CTPIA is responsible to conduct exchange of information amongst members, collection and publication of industrial statistics of domestic market, research for industry-related issues, training courses or conference, publicity activities, and liaison with other organizations domestically and internationally.

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#### **EuroCommerce**

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EuroCommerce is the leading representation of the retail, wholesale and international trade sectors in Europe. Its membership includes national commerce federations in 31 countries, Europe's 27 leading retail and wholesale companies, and federations representing specific sectors of commerce. Overall, it is the voice for six million retail, wholesale, and other trading companies.

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ESF is a private sector trade association that represents the interests of the European services industry in International Trade Negotiations in Services. It comprises major European service companies at the CEO level and European service sector federations covering service sectors such as financial services, tourism, telecommunications, maritime transport, business and professional services, distribution, postal and express delivery, IT services, environmental services and the audio-visual industry.

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#### **Footwear Distributors and Retailers of America (FDRA)**

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Founded in 1944, FDRA represents the entire footwear industry from small family-owned footwear businesses to global footwear companies. It also serves the full footwear supply chain from research, design and development, to manufacturing and distribution, to retailers selling to global consumers. In all, FDRA supports over 130 companies and 250 brands, or 80 percent of total U.S. footwear sales, making it the largest and most respected American footwear trade and business association.

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#### **Foreign Trade Association (FTA)**

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FTA is the association of European and International commerce that promotes the values of free and sustainable trade. It brings together hundreds of retailers, importers, brand companies, and national associations to improve the political and legal framework for trade in a sustainable way.

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#### **Japan Services Network (JSN)**

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JSN is English name of Committee on Trade and Investment of Keidanren (Japan Business Federation) to represent internationally the committee's position on services trade. Keidanren is a comprehensive economic organization with a membership comprised of Japanese leading companies along with nationwide industrial associations and regional economic organizations. Its mission is to support corporate activities which contribute to the self-sustaining development of the Japanese economy and improvement in the quality of life for the Japanese people.

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#### **Korea International Trade Association (KITA)**

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Established in 1946 in Seoul, Korea, KITA, is a non-profit economic organisation representing interests of its 71,000 member companies. KITA has 13 regional centres within Korea and 10 overseas centres including Brussels Centre located in Brussels, Belgium. KITA Brussels Centre carries out variety of trade promotional activities such as business meetings, trade conferences & exhibitions, matchmaking services, information sharing and many more.

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#### **National Retail Federation (NRF)**

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The NRF is the world's largest retail trade association, representing discount and department stores, home goods and specialty stores, Main Street merchants, grocers, wholesalers, chain restaurants and Internet retailers from the United States and more than 45 countries. Retail is the nation's largest private sector employer, supporting one in four U.S. jobs – 42 million working Americans. Contributing \$2.6 trillion to annual GDP, retail is a daily barometer for the nation's economy.

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As the largest retail trade association in Canada and the voice of retail, RCC represents retailers of all types and sizes, including independent merchants, specialty retailers, grocery and pharmacy chains, department stores, big box retailers and dot.com merchants. RCC's membership represents more than 85% of all retail sales in Canada. Retailers employ more than 2 million Canadians and the industry is the largest employer in the country. RCC is recognized as the most authoritative and effective advocate for retailers in Canada and its mission is to advance, promote and protect the interests of its members through effective advocacy, communications and education.

#### **General Chamber of Commerce of the R.O.C. (ROCCOC)**

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ROCCOC, which was founded in 1946, is the highest organization of the business community in Taiwan. There are several different categories of Chambers or Associations as its members, under this structure, it including 2,400 business communities at all levels, and cover around 1.42 million companies & stores. The ROCCOC is a non-profit organization devoted to promoting the common interests of private sector business community in Taiwan, and to elevate the domestic commercial environment as well as the investment both domestic and abroad.

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**SME Europe**

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SME Europe is the European People's Party's (EPP) organisation for Small and Medium Entrepreneurs. Its purpose is to shape EU policies in a more SME friendly way. SMEs are the backbone of the European economy as it is especially them that create sustainable jobs, growth and prosperity. As a pro-active organisation within the political networks of Christian-Democrats and Conservatives, SME Europe wants to bring a new spirit and a fresh entrepreneurial wind into the political debate. The interests of SMEs are best served when market mechanisms can freely make an impact. It is about time to contain the role of governments, so we need to have less and smarter state intervention. This provides the best framework conditions for SMEs to grow.

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**SME Global**

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SME Global is the business organization of the International Democrat Union, which gathers political parties of the centre-right from all continents. It provides an institutional framework for small and medium sized entrepreneurs and focuses on trade issues as one of its main fields of activity. SME Global was founded in 2003 by its current president, Dr Paul Rübigen, Member of the European Parliament.

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**The United States Fashion Industry Association (USFIA)**

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USFIA supports fashion made possible by global trade. USFIA represents textile and apparel brands, retailers, importers, and wholesalers based in the United States and doing business globally. Founded in 1989 as the United States Association of Importers of Textiles & Apparel with the goal of eliminating the global apparel quota system, USFIA now works to eliminate the tariff and non-tariff barriers that impede the industry's ability to trade freely and create economic opportunities in the United States and abroad.