

# STUDY ON PRACTICAL OPTIONS TOWARDS INCREASING OIC MEMBER STATES COORDINATION AT THE WTO



ICDT

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study addresses: the assessment of the current coordination of the OIC MS in the matters of the WTO, the presentation of the current Groups coordination practices within WTO, and the proposed practical options to enhance the mechanisms of coordination, taking into consideration the OIC MS capabilities and specificities. Coordination means “the act of working together”. More emphasis is now generally placed into establishing and maintaining stable and sustainable intra-group coordination mechanisms, whether through a systematized model of rotating group coordination, or through group acceptance of a member taking on the coordination functions of the group.

Group cohesiveness has become a key priority in terms of coalition-building. The task of coordinating is the outcome of group members who provide the necessary human, administrative and logistical resources in their missions in Geneva. Coordination problems stem from coordinating global linkages, or exchanges of information, products, services, and money across national borders. For the participation of a country in the WTO negotiations, a two-stage policy process must be in place. (1) Countries need to be able to identify their strategic interests and be informed about the consequences of the various policy options open to them. (2) Trade policy process consists of the identification of a negotiation strategy. In this process, the regional dimension can usefully come into play.

The structure of the study is three-fold: the current status of coordination among OIC countries WTO members, the dynamic of coalitions within the WTO, and the way forward: proposals for the increasing of OIC MS coordination levels within the WTO.

### **Chapter I: The current status of coordination among OIC countries WTO members**

A strong interest for the issue of coordination vis-à-vis WTO matters started with the 13th Session of the COMCEC in 1997. Since that date, WTO issues have always been a pivotal point in COMCEC meetings agendas, both on Follow up and Ministerial sessions. The COMCEC also requested the IDB and the other OIC related institutions, to provide assistance to Islamic countries in future negotiations. More specifically, it urged IDB and ICDT to pool their efforts and means to reinforce the human capacities of OIC MS members of WTO, for a more efficient view and a greater integration within the MTS and international trade.

OIC role in WTO issues is embodied by the following institutions: OIC General Secretariat Economic Affairs Department, OIC Geneva Office, COMCEC, ICDT and IDB Group. They contribute to provide MS with technical assistance, consultancy services, WTO accession, etc.

The WTO Groups where we find the most important number of OIC Countries are, by order of importance: W52 Sponsors, G-90, African Group, ACP, LDCs, Asian Developing Members, and G-33. These groups are all “Southern Global Coalitions”: some are issue-based, some are regional/geographical, while others are characteristic coalitions. For OIC MSt, the priorities are: General and Regional issues, TRIPS and General Indications, Agriculture and Preferences, followed by others issues like NAMA, Cotton, Rules, etc.

### **Chapter II: The Dynamic of Coalitions within the WTO**

Since the Uruguay Round, several OIC countries have been relatively more active in the Doha Round negotiations, have formed alliances with other developing countries to

increase their bargaining power and have adopted a strategic approach to trade which ensures that their participation in the Doha Round reforms does not jeopardize the achievement of key national development goals. With the Doha Round negotiations, a considerable number of new coalitions from the South have emerged, having two characteristics: Southern Global/Regional Groupings and Coalitions and Characteristic-Based Coalitions. We focused on the following groups: Arab countries Group, African Group, ASEAN countries Group and ACP Group.

**Arab Group:** In 2006, the Arab countries decided to join together in the WTO in order to better coordinate their positions in the Doha Round negotiations. The group would include the 12 Arab countries already members of the WTO: Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and the UAE. A major hindrance facing Arab countries full participation in the work of the WTO is insufficient human resources, linked with the lack of technical expertise and the unavailability of competent staff. Arab countries representation in the WTO is limited to a single or a handful of officials. Moreover, delegations of Arab countries in Geneva do not cover the work of the WTO exclusively.

**African Group:** In the aftermath of the WTO agreement, most African delegations felt the need to join forces and take strong and unified positions. The coordination of the African group at the WTO started in 1995. The African Group has the negotiating power on all matters under negotiation at the WTO. The declaration of the African Trade Ministers on the negotiations is the starting point. The advisers/experts translate in technical terms the position taken by the Ministers. The African Group has a rotating coordination of one year. The Group is represented by the Ambassador of the coordinating country to other delegations and groups. The Group holds meetings to discuss issues of common concern or to make decisions on issues of differing interests. The African Group developed a system of focal points, whereby an individual country takes the lead in a particular subject. Notwithstanding their negotiating weaknesses, African Members of the WTO have been active in the Doha Round. Africa's participation continues to improve significantly on the level of coordination with respect to African officials in Geneva and more importantly to Ministers.

**ASEAN Group:** ASEAN members have collectively and individually adapted to the new rules of interaction between developing countries and the MTS negotiations. In Geneva, the members divide assignments for coordinating WTO issues/committees and, when agreed, the coordinating country conveys the collective ASEAN view. There is an ASEAN Geneva Committee which meets formally at least twice a year, and holds informal weekly meetings at ambassador level. The motivation of economizing on the use of the limited number of delegates resident in Geneva and available to work on GATT/WTO activities is important for smaller WTO ASEAN members. A good degree of cooperation/coordination has been achieved. Solidarity among ASEAN members has allowed for the maintenance of difficult negotiation positions in the face of strong opposition from key developed WTO Members.

**ACP Group:** There are currently 80 member countries in the ACP Group: 48 are from Sub-Saharan Africa, 16 from the Caribbean and 15 from the Pacific region. 60 of the ACP members are also WTO members, 8 of them are in accession process, while 11 are neither members of the WTO nor observers. The ACP countries are participating in two parallel rounds of negotiations. Most of them, as WTO MS have been participating in the renegotiation since 2000 of the agricultural agreement, implemented in 1995. The renegotiation was scheduled to be completed by the end of 2005, on the occasion of the 6th

WTO MC in Hong Kong. The Group's major strength is its exceptionality in providing a tri-continental outreach and an avenue for participation and impact on global governance in key areas. An ACP culture has evolved over many years of political and diplomatic consensus building processes and contributes in keeping the Group as a global actor.

### **Chapter III: The Way Forward: Proposals for the Increasing of OIC Member Countries Coordination Levels within the WTO.**

#### **I- Recommendations of OIC GS in 1997:**

These recommendations, dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC in 1997, underlined "the importance of the initiative to establish a mechanism for consultation among member countries during the WTO meetings". It also pointed out that the globalization, which encompassed varying degrees of increasing integration of world markets of goods, services, capital, technology and labor, presented opportunities and challenges for the development process". The Report also stated that "interdependence among countries had already led to the emergence and strengthening of regional groupings", and expressed "the importance the cooperation activities within the Islamic world", stressing the important role of OIC in this connection. From that date on, the WTO issue was to be considered a permanent item of the agenda of the COMCEC and its Follow-up Committee. These were the four steps suggested: (1) Keeping tab on relevant developments, (2) Determining right timing of meetings, (3) Undertaking necessary works for holding meetings, and (4) Effecting follow-up actions.

#### **II- Synthesis of recommendations of OIC MS:**

In order to uncover the positions of OIC MS relating to the coordination issue, an empirical study was conducted under the form of a questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided into four sections; each section corresponds to a level on information needed to address the issue of coordination. The findings are presented here accordingly.

##### ***Section/Level 1- Importance and knowledge on the MTS and implications of OIC MS:***

The average number of officers working on WTO issues in OIC MS is around 6 officers in each country. In most cases, these officers are affiliated to the Ministries of Trade. These Geneva-based officers cover other IO. The levels of qualification and skills of officers were classified in 3 categories: high, medium and basic. In some cases, officers seem to have been nominated according to other criteria. In a few cases, officers have highly benefited from capacity-building programs (ICDT, IDB) or similar programs on an average basis. In the majority of cases, officers were offered only a basic training. Some MS officers have highly taken advantage from WTO Awareness Programs, others have benefited on an average/basic level.

##### ***Section/Level 2- Coordination at the National, Regional and Multilateral Levels:***

In general, the institutions involved in trade policy are, by order of importance: the Ministries of Trade, Industry, Agriculture, Economy, Finance and Foreign Affairs. In some cases, the private sector and NGOs are also associated. In almost all cases, there exist different national institutions that serve as national coordination frameworks: national committees, institutions, working groups, etc. Most MS are members of WTO coordination groups: AG, ACP, G90, G90+China, G33, C4, LDCs, W52, Arab G, etc. Some OIC MS hold Ambassadors meetings on WTO issues, mainly prior to WTO MCs are: Involvement. More negotiations on coordination. Exchange of information. Participation of consultants and experts. Follow up. Examining of priorities.

***Section/Level 3- OIC institutions and MS capacity to identify and implement pro-development reforms and appropriate policies to benefit from the MTS:***

The findings point out to the following priorities as identified by MS, classified by recurrence/order of importance: (Sustainable) Development, Agriculture, Technical Assistance, Market Access, TRIPS, Trade Facilitation, SPS, Cotton, OTC, Doha Package, Capacity-building, Food Safety, Competition, Geographical indicators, Tropical Products, Bananas, E-Commerce, Public Markets, NTB, Acceding Conditions, MTS, NAMA, Public Health, Aid for Trade. Areas where common positions can be stated are: Aid for Trade, OIC Issues, Coordination issues, MC Agendas, MS Positions, Agriculture, SDT. The existing opportunities for OIC to improve were organized on three levels:

- Political/systemic: 1. Intensive communication and consultations on intra-OIC issues. Intra-OIC cooperation. Intra-OIC TPS. 2. Taking into account political considerations and going beyond the Doha Round Objectives. 3. Increasing of national capacities.
- Economic: 1. Social and economic development. 2. Trade, investment, E-Commerce and digital economy. and
- Technical: Support of AATB and AFTIAS

Certain constraints were identified and should be addressed to improve. These can be classified in the following categories:

- Political: Harmonize implementation of measures, Stay away from political disputes; Promote accession to WTO (ICDT and IDB); Share information; Support existing mechanisms.
- Economic: Enhance production capacity; Benefit from intra-OIC trade; Enhance trade facilitation.
- Technical: Undertake more studies on trade opportunities; Develop technical assistance.
- Hybrid categories: Benefit from MTS, OIC to support AFT and capacity-building; More projects on sustainable development; More direct consultations.

***Section/Level 4- Improved Communication and flow of information between OIC MS, OIC Geneva-based representatives and OIC institutions and GS:***

All MS agree on the necessity to improve the OIC Geneva machinery; they suggest a general support for the OIC Geneva Office, meetings to increase information flow, communication, and coordination according to needs, with a varying periodicity (once every 6, 3 months and even once to twice a month). Most MS agree on the importance of Focal Points: on a case by case basis, within a rotating system, for the sharing and dissemination of information among MS Delegations, to discuss coordination issues, to facilitate working on ad hoc issues. Focal Points should be well trained. Most MS have not chaired WTO Coordinating Groups, mainly because of a shortage in human resources.

Improving the capacity of OIC to be involved in WTO matters, developing responses on priority issues and having more influence on WTO processes would allow to defend MS positions. The main constraint is that OIC does not have an Observer Status yet. Therefore, the following steps should be taken: 1. More efficient consultations for intra-OIC coordination and unified positions, 2. Associating consultants and experts in this process, 3. Advocating with other WTO Groups and, 4. Being closer to WTO (Secretariat) and lobbying.

**Synthesis of the Findings**

<b>Components of coordination</b>	<b>Associated coordination processes: coordination means “the act of working together”.</b>
<b>Goals</b>	<p><b>Identifying goals: activities directed towards some goals:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Activities seem to be directed towards the issues related to (sustainable) development, and trade.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sectors such as agriculture, technical assistance, market access, TRIPS, Trade facilitation, SPS, cotton, etc. are also important.</li> <li>▪ Increasing national capacities.</li> <li>▪ Support of existing (coordination) mechanisms.</li> <li>▪ Awareness of need to go beyond the Doha Round objectives.</li> </ul>
<b>Activities</b>	<p><b>Mapping goals to activities (goal decomposition): one or more actors performing some activities. Activities are not independent.</b></p> <p>By order of importance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Capacity-building projects/initiatives.</li> <li>▪ Awareness of advantages/benefits to be taken from WTO programs.</li> <li>▪ Awareness of more efficient consultations for unified positions, through more sharing of information, better flow of communication, frequent OIC MS Ambassadors' meetings.</li> </ul>
<b>Actors</b>	<p><b>Mapping activities to actors (task assignment): activities carried out by actors in a way to help achieve the goals.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Institutions involved: Ministries of Trade, Industry, Agriculture, Economy, Finance, Foreign Affairs.</li> </ul> <p>--In some MS, associating of NGOs.</p> <p>--Creation of national coordination frameworks or similar institutions.</p> <p>--Membership in some of the WTO coordination groups.</p>
<b>Interdependencies</b>	<p><b>'Managing' interdependencies (resource allocation, sequencing, and synchronizing): reaching of efficient coordination based on compromise/consensus with regard to all four above-mentioned dimensions. Coordination resulting in more or less elaborate agreements.</b></p> <p>--In general, OIC (as an IO) not enough involved in WTO issues.</p> <p>--Some MS trying to reach common positions on issues, such as: Aid for Trade, OIC coordination problems, MC Agendas, etc.</p> <p>--Political and systemic interdependencies: lack of intensive communication and consultations on intra-OIC issues.</p> <p>--Suggestions to start on a case by case basis (ad hoc issues).</p>

### III- Main policy options:

According to these findings, it is possible to imagine three possible options to develop coordination among OIC MS at the WTO, ranging from the most radical to the most conservative.

#### Option 1: Creation of an OIC Group within the WTO

The first option and the most radical one would be to create an OIC Group within the WTO that will resemble the African Group in its structure and mechanisms and be adapted to the specificities of the OIC MS. OIC is not an economic grouping in the first place; rather, it is historically a religious entity and it is presently a political entity. OIC is a very large IO; the number of OIC MS is huge, and the whole "group" does not meet in Geneva. The actions of OIC MS at the WTO tend to be very pragmatic. Within OIC, African and Asian MS are active in other Groups. Therefore, this potential OIC MS Group needs to be reactivated through capacity-building, technical assistance and support in negotiations. The added value of an OIC Group at the WTO is that it could produce new ideas about the future of the WTO, which is presently at a critical stage.

#### Option 2: Fundamental and deep reform of the current practice

This second option implies the following steps: Establishing an independent agenda item dedicated to WTO issues at the COMCEC meetings. Holding consultative meetings at the level of senior officials based in Geneva and/or in Casablanca and Jeddah alternatively, to discuss priorities issues. Organizing a Consultative Ministerial Meeting on WTO issues (on the sidelines of COMCEC Ministerial Meetings) before the WTO MC. Empowering ICDT

and OIC Geneva Office: a WTO Unit could be created at the Geneva Office in cooperation with ICDT and IDB. Here again, in order to reform the current practice, developing capacity-building that addresses both trade negotiating capacity and implementation aspects is indispensable. OIC MS capacity-building should be reexamined and enhanced. Main-streaming trade at the institutional level is equally important. OIC countries need to ensure that trade is coordinated within the different Governments' Ministries. Benefiting from the mechanisms adapted from the experiences of different Groups at the WTO is useful. Organizing meetings of all OIC Institutions in charge of trade issues (ICDT, IDB, IFTC, COMCEC, OIC/SG, ICCIA, SESRIC, and WTO, UNCTAD, WCO, UNECA, etc.) is of great importance. ICDT role in training is crucial. It is also suggested to encourage the creation of an OIC informal group within the WTO by the Geneva Delegations.

**Option 3:** Keeping the present practice "as is": quasi-status-quo/shallow reforms

This implies: Carrying on the current practice along with a dedicated program to Geneva-based missions, and more coordination among the main stakeholders: OIC GS, Geneva OIC Permanent Mission, COMCEC, IDB Group and ICDT. It implies also increasing capacity building activities in WTO issues, empowering OIC Geneva Office and enhancing its role in WTO matters.

# INTRODUCTION

Within their mandate relating to assisting OIC Member Countries in international trade matters, ICDT and IDB Group used to provide technical assistance in Multilateral Trading System issues since the launching of the Uruguay Round under GATT Agreement. Since then, ICDT and IDB have pooled their efforts to meet the requests and needs of OIC Countries by coordinating their efforts under the umbrella of COMCEC and OIC General Secretariat.

In this context, the 33<sup>rd</sup> session of the COMCEC held in Istanbul on 20-23 November 2017 requested ICDT and IDB Group to submit a working paper to the consideration of the next COMCEC meeting about practical options to increase OIC Ministers of Trade Coordination vis-a-vis recent developments in the negotiations at the WTO and to formulate positions on priority issues for OIC countries in the current Doha Development Round, and also on new issues currently being proposed in the WTO. (OIC/COMCEC/33-17.RES). Thus, our main focus will be the issue of coordination; consequently, negotiations are not our focus area. Almost no information will be given on how WTO negotiations are conducted or how agreements are reached or concluded.

For ICDT and IDB Group, this study shall address the following objectives:

- 1) The assessment of the current coordination of the OIC Member States in the matters of the WTO,
- 2) The presentation of the current coordination practices within WTO through WTO Groups, and
- 3) The proposed practical options to enhance the mechanisms of coordination, taking into consideration of the OIC Member States capabilities and specificities.

## **The concept of Coordination:**

According to a broad definition, coordination means 'the act of working together'. Thus, there must be one or more actors performing some activities that are directed towards some goals. By the word 'together', the definition implies that the activities are not independent. Instead, they must be activities carried out by actors in a way that helps to achieve the goals. These goal-relevant relationships between the activities are called interdependencies.

In the table below, the relevant components and the coordination processes associated with them are summarized. Four components – goals, activities, actors and interdependencies – are necessary for a situation to be considered in terms of coordination. Efficient coordination occurs when an agreement based on compromise or consensus is reached with regard to all four dimensions concerning the issue at hand. The ability to reach an agreement does not in itself necessarily indicate a high quality coordination process. Coordination can result in various kinds of more or less elaborate agreements. Efficient coordination generally results in elaborate agreements that include all four dimensions. (NEDERGAARD, Peter, 2007).

**Table 1: Components of Coordination**

<b>Components of coordination</b>	Associated coordination processes
<b>Goals</b>	Identifying goals (e.g. goal selection)
<b>Activities</b>	Mapping goals to activities (e.g. goal decomposition)
<b>Actors</b>	Mapping activities to actors (e.g. task assignment)
<b>Interdependencies</b>	'Managing' interdependencies (e.g. resource allocation, sequencing, and synchronizing)

Source: MALONE, T.W. and CROWSTON, K. (1991)

The current period of globalization brings with it calls for international coordination and collective action. Expanding markets lead to the deepening interdependence of economies and the growing demand for coordination in a range of regulatory areas including food safety, banking and product standards. (COGLIANESE, Cary)

### **Coordination and Leadership:**

As a result, more emphasis is now generally placed into establishing and maintaining stable and sustainable intra-group coordination mechanisms, whether through a systematized model of rotating group coordination, or through group acceptance of a member taking on the coordination functions of the group. Group cohesiveness has become a key priority in terms of coalition-building. In this study, we shall be using the terms coalition and alliance in an interchangeable way, notwithstanding the differences that exist between them.

Rotating group coordination mechanisms remain the primary mode for group leadership of the African, ACP, and LDCs Groups. The task of coordinating the overall actions and positions of the members of these groups is rotated among group members who provide the necessary human, administrative and logistical resources in their missions in Geneva. Overall group coordination is usually done by the ambassador of the country acting as the coordinator, supported by the Geneva-based staff of his or her mission. The task of coordination is made easier through the practice of selecting "issue Focal Points" – basically another member of the group willing and able to take the lead for the group on specific negotiating issues by assigning one of their technical-level experts or delegates in the Geneva missions to take charge of suggesting, formulating and coordinating group positions and actions on such specific issues.

Coalitions can agree on having specific members who provide both coordination and leadership functions. Strong leadership by some members of the group and acceptance of such leadership on the basis of perceived commonalities of interest is essential in ensuring group success, especially in the case of the bloc-type or issue-based groups. For example, the leadership roles of Brazil and India ensured that the G-20 would not collapse after the Cancun Ministerial Conference. In the case of the G-33, the leadership of Indonesia and the Philippines was and continues to be instrumental in keeping the group together (YU, Vicente Paolo B., 2008).

### **Coordination problems:**

The first type of problem is one of coordinating global linkages, or exchanges of information, products, services, and money across national borders. Coordination problems are of particular concern to manufacturers who confront different national regulatory standards. National regulations govern both the design and performance of products sold within a country (product standards), as well as the processes by which products are made (process standards). Differences in standards may reflect different conditions or preferences within nation-states which justify different, even incompatible, standards.

### **Regional support and coordination:**

For the participation of a country in the WTO negotiations to have any significant value, a two-stage policy process must be in place. First, countries need to be able to identify their strategic interests and be informed about the consequences of the various policy options open to them. This first stage requires proper capacity to analyze and formulate trade policy and negotiation positions. The second stage of the trade policy process consists of the identification of a negotiation strategy. This requires the formation of alliances and coalitions with partners sharing common views and trade interests. Strategies must be flexible and reaction time limited, so as to adapt to the rapidly evolving negotiation environment. These two stages should not be seen as independent but rather as complementary.

In this process, the regional dimension can usefully come into play. First, regional organizations can support the preparatory work of their MS. Coordination of trade capacity building programs, organization of regional workshops, elaboration of technical papers and dissemination of information on WTO issues are examples of such supportive activities. Regional platforms may also contribute to facilitate the exchange of information and sharing of experiences among neighboring countries. Second, regional groupings may have a role to play in helping their member countries to coordinate their position at WTO level, in a way consistent with their regional integration and trade policy objectives. (SANOUSI, Bilal and SZEPESI, Stefan)

In the present context of global economy, this can be facilitated by a masterly display of international diplomacy. National commitments and transparency regulations, combined with a balanced differentiation of converging obligations on the part of industrialized and developing countries and a comprehensive solidarity pact in favor of the poorest and most vulnerable can manage to bring every state on board in the end. Particular attention should be paid to the agenda-setting power of alliances in the course of the forthcoming development and implementation of Agreements at national and international levels.

### **Motivations and conditions for successful Alliance Formation**

The constant leitmotiv is about increasing political ambition and closer attention to the concerns of developing states. The main motive for the formation of coalitions can also be the fear to lose influence. Alliances differ in terms of the degree of formalization. The more formal groupings are, the more permanent they are likely to be. However, selective, short-term and ad hoc alliances can also be as successful. Both hard and soft factors can be identified among the conditions of success.

**Table 2: Factors of success** (Adapted from HIRSCH, Thomas, 2016)

Hard factors	Soft factors
Common goals in tune with the core interests of the members; Conviction of the partners that their aims can be better achieved in an alliance; Political relevance (sufficient and/or politically important members); Good coordination, balanced representation; Adequate resources, expertise, intelligent division of labor and effective strategies; Public perception: actions and messages with strong political and media resonance; Good balance between exclusivity and openness to third parties; Impact orientation: flexibility and ability to change.	Integrity: transparency and accountability; Good personal relations between key personalities; Strong mutual understanding among partners; Contextualization and anticipatory assessment of the opposing side; Positive image as a motor of trade-policy progress (enabling, not hindering).

Alliances can be divided into groupings “among equals” and groupings “of different partners”. Experts from the developing countries, when asked about it, tend to prefer alliances between equals, arguing that mutual understanding, trust and cooperation on an equal footing are more likely and make it easier to work together. Internationally, such alliances require intercultural sensitivity and trust-building measures.

### **Limits and Risks of Coalition Formation**

The agenda-setting power of alliances has its limits, especially in multilateral negotiation processes, which ultimately require unanimity. These limits depend largely on context and situation, and no general rules can be formulated. This means that alliances in conjunction with formal groups of countries to enhance the pursuit of interests must constantly be reformed in changing formations. On one hand, a certain exclusivity can make an alliance attractive and viable. On the other hand, it can arouse resentment among non-members and even deepen lines of conflict. A balance has to be found in the management of expectations; in other words, arousing high expectations to maximize mobilization, while avoiding disappointment that would weaken the alliance. (HIRSCH, Thomas, 2016)

### **Structure of the study:**

1. The current status of coordination among OIC countries WTO members
2. The dynamic of coalitions within the WTO
3. The way forward: proposals for the increasing of OIC Member Countries coordination levels within the WTO

# CHAPTER I

## THE CURRENT STATUS OF COORDINATION AMONG OIC COUNTRIES WTO MEMBERS

Coalitions and coordination enhance the influence and power of individual Member States in international Organizations that goes beyond their individual power. The WTO Ministerial Conferences are of great importance, since various issues discussed impact countries, especially Developing Countries and their economic future. Studies and the practice show that high-income countries want to talk about new issues that are part of the free trade and liberalization ideas that they promote, while low-income countries want to limit talks to old issues mostly on agriculture and TRIPS that affect them the most. We witness these same tendencies among OIC Member Countries.

### SECTION I: HISTORY - THE EARLY DEVELOPMENTS

A strong interest for the issue of coordination vis-à-vis WTO matters started in 1997. Since that date, WTO issues have always been a pivotal point on COMCEC meetings agendas, both on Follow up Committees and Standing Committees. The 13th Session of the COMCEC, held in Istanbul from 1 to 4 November 1997, while appreciating the efforts of the Islamic Development Bank to assist OIC Member Countries in their endeavors to become active members of WTO, and the initiative taken by IDB to organize consultations among MS at the WTO Ministerial Meeting held in Singapore in December 1996 and also its organization of numerous seminars and workshops on the accession to WTO, requested IDB to pursue its assistance to member countries in their efforts to become members of WTO and to benefit more efficiently from the provisions of the Uruguay Round Agreements.

The Agenda of the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the COMCEC (Istanbul, 1-4 November 1998) and all the Agendas of the following Sessions considered coordination on WTO matters as a very important issue, involving a bulk of OIC institutions: The General Secretariat, IDB, ICDT, SESRIC, and ICCI. Therefore, it invited all these institutions to organize consultations before and during the 2nd WTO Ministerial Meetings, called upon IDB to pursue its program of assistance to OIC member countries applying for WTO membership, and to assist OIC member countries who are already members of WTO, in order to benefit more efficiently from the provisions of the Uruguay Round Agreements.

The COMCEC also invited the IDB and other OIC related institutions, to provide assistance to Islamic countries in future negotiations, especially concerning policy rules of competition, direct foreign investments, and rules governing the interface "Trade and Environment". More specifically, it urged IDB and ICDT to pool their efforts and means to reinforce the human capacities of OIC MS, members of WTO, for a more efficient view and a greater integration within the MTS and international trade (Sources: Reports and resolutions of the different Session of the COMCEC, from 1997 on, COMCEC Coordination Office Ankara).

### SECTION II: OIC ROLE IN WTO ISSUES

Several OIC institutions are to be involved in the coordinating process: OIC General Secretariat/Economic Affairs Department, OIC Geneva Office, COMCEC, ICDT and IDB Group. Let us have a look at their different roles.

## **1. OIC General Secretariat Economic Affairs Department:**

Among other goals, the Department of Economic Affairs is in charge of the overall coordination of the implementation of OIC economic policies, programs and projects as approved by MS. It also advises the OIC Secretary General on socio-economic developments in MS, including issues bearing on international organizations. Furthermore, the department helps MS find multilateral solutions to their respective national developmental challenges and priorities through the various technical assistance and capacity-building support by relevant OIC donor countries. Additionally, the department coordinates the activities of relevant OIC institutions working in the economic domain with a view to maximizing service delivery and efficient allocation of resources, especially in the following issues:

- International and Regional Cooperation;
- OIC Special Development Programs;
- Cooperation in Financial Sector;
- Private Sector Development;
- Training and Capacity-Building.

## **2. OIC Geneva Office:**

All OIC MS have a representation office to the WTO in Geneva, except: Guinea-Bissau and Suriname.

### **OIC Geneva Delegation:**

The OIC Geneva Delegation does not have observer status at the WTO. The official request for observer status was made on 10 January 1997. The OIC Delegation has requested observer status in the following WTO bodies: General Council, Council for Trade in Goods, Committee on Trade and Development and Committee on Regional Trade Agreements. In his response (dated 4 March 1999), Mr. Peter Tulloch, the then Director of WTO Development Division, responded that the Committee on Trade and Development had decided at its 24th session to grant special observer status (ad hoc) to the OIC Delegation for the CTD meetings on a case-by-case basis.

Currently, the OIC Delegation has an Observer Status and is following the meetings on a case-by-case basis of the Committee on Trade and Development and Sub-Committee on LDCs.

### **OIC Geneva Group Coordinator on Economic and Development Issues:**

In order to strengthen the cooperation in the economic domain, the OIC Geneva Group has decided to establish a Coordination on Economic and Development Issues. The Delegation of Iran, the former coordinator, has proposed the following Plan of Action on Economic and Development Issues in WTO-related activities:

- Organizing workshops for capital and Geneva-based officials and experts for better understanding and deepening the knowledge of the rules and regulations of the WTO in a trilateral cooperation between OIC, IDB and WTO Secretariat.
- Organizing workshops/seminars for capital and Geneva-based officials and experts in acceding countries to WTO for better understanding and deepening the knowledge of the complicated and lengthy process of accession negotiations in a trilateral cooperation between OIC, IDB and WTO secretariat.
- Increasing market access to OIC products through:

1. Aid for Trade projects in OIC MS;

2. Joint Public Private Partnerships for enhancing market access to promote Intra - OIC trade;
3. Supporting the on-going Capacity-building Programs to facilitate accession to the WTO;
4. Intensifying efforts towards achieving OIC Observer Status in the WTO.

Taking into account the above mentioned data, the OIC Geneva Office has very limited mandate and scope of action. It should be given a more important role and reactivated in order to implement the decisions taken by the relevant OIC institutions.

### **3. COMCEC:**

The Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC) is the main multilateral economic and commercial cooperation platform of the Islamic world.

The objectives of the COMCEC are as follows:

- To address the economic challenges of the Islamic Ummah and to contribute to the development efforts of the MS.
- To produce and disseminate knowledge, share experience and best practices, develop a common understanding, and approximate policies among the MS in line with the vision and principles of the Strategy.
- To serve as the central forum for the MS to discuss international economic and commercial issues.
- To study all possible means of strengthening economic and commercial cooperation among the MS.
- To draw up programs and submit proposals designed to increase the welfare of the MS.
- To ensure the overall coordination of the activities of the OIC relating to economic and commercial cooperation among the MS.

The COMCEC Coordination Office coordinates the implementation of the COMCEC Strategy in conjunction with OIC MS and Institutions and other IOs with a view to ensuring effective cooperation. Some of its functions and responsibilities are:

- To ensure the preparation and organization of the meetings under the work of the COMCEC;
- To coordinate the implementation and review of the Strategy and submit progress reports to the COMCEC Sessions and Follow-up Committee Meetings;
- To undertake activities with the OIC MS, Institutions and other IOs in order to realize the objectives of the COMCEC;
- To conduct and/or coordinate the necessary studies for improving economic and commercial cooperation under the COMCEC;
- To communicate with the OIC MS, Institutions and other IOs to ensure effective cooperation.

### **4. ICDT:**

The objectives of the ICDT are related to the promotion of trade exchange and investments among the OIC MS. Some of the means of ICDT include:

- Encouraging contacts among businessmen from the MS and bringing them together;
- Organizing symposia and training seminars for participants from OIC MS.
- Helping disseminate trade information and data among OIC MS.
- Undertaking studies and research.

- Helping the OIC MS create or reinforce national organizations or associations for the promotion of trade.

The ICDT carried out several activities to serve OIC MS' economic interests with regard to WTO issues. The main activities revolve around the following axes:

- Capacity-building through the organization of training workshops, sensitizing seminars, essentially for public senior officials;
- Collaboration with IDB Group during the Consultative Ministerial Meetings on the side-lines of WTO Conferences;
- Reporting to MS on regular basis and publication of studies on WTO issues; and
- Representation of the OIC General Secretariat at the WTO Conferences.

**Table 3: Selected activities of ICDT related to technical assistance and capacity building in WTO matters organized since the 27<sup>th</sup> session of the COMCEC**

	<b>Actions/Events</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Observations</b>
1	Workshop on the "Administration of RTAs and the prospects of Regional Integration in the OIC MS"	21 <sup>st</sup> - 23 <sup>rd</sup> December 2015	Casablanca, Morocco.	Meeting attended by 22 OIC MS
2	Seminar on The Outcome of WTO 10 <sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference and Accession to WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement	25 February 2016	Casablanca, Morocco	Increase of OIC MS in WTO to 44
3	Regional seminar on "The WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and the Prospects of Activating the OIC Single Window" for the benefit of the MS of the African Countries:	30 May-01 June 2016	Casablanca - Morocco	ICDT, IDB and Ministry of Foreign Trade of the Kingdom of Morocco
4	Workshop on the Mechanisms for settlement of Trade and Investment Disputes among the OIC MS	20-21 February 2017	Casablanca, Morocco	Experts from ICC Morocco, CFCIM, TOBB, ASMEX, WTO, UNCITRAL, IICRA, UNCTAD, and ICDT.
5	Training Workshop on Trade in Services for OIC MS	22-24 March 2017	Casablanca, Morocco	By: ICDT, SESRIC, IDB and Mof FT of Morocco. Experts from: COMCEC, ICDT, SESRIC, IDB, LAS, ITC and UNCTAD.
6	Workshop on the Preparation of WTO Ministerial Conference 11: An African Perspective	17-19 July 2017	Casablanca, Morocco	FAO, UNCTAD, CUTS International, IDB and ICDT.

### 5. IDB Group: IDB actions regarding WTO issues:

IDB has always implemented its WTO Program in close collaboration with the WTO and OIC institutions. The IDB-WTO Technical Assistance and Capacity-building Program was launched in 1997. Many actions were undertaken especially the Trade Policy Courses and seminars on accessions to WTO which are the flagships of the program. Since the 33<sup>rd</sup> Session of the COMCEC (November 2017), the focus has been on helping the Member Countries in their accession to WTO, and strengthening their negotiation skills.

**Table 4: The Major Elements of the Program:**

1	<b>Seminars and Workshops</b>	As of end of October 2017, more than 86 Seminars and 48 Workshops have been organized.
2	<b>Trade Policy Courses</b>	Short versions of the WTO Trade Policy Course offered by the WTO in Geneva, on: market access, customs, different sectors, legal aspects, etc.
3	<b>Special Studies</b>	In-depth studies on WTO-related issues: Agriculture, Services, TRIPS, E-Commerce, etc.
4	<b>Consultative Meetings</b>	In conjunction with WTO MC, to exchange views and act as a Group. 9 Consultative Meetings organized.
5	<b>WTO Technical Assistance to OIC Member States</b>	Providing specific technical assistance to Member Countries on vital issues: WTO accession, providing capacity-building, etc.

So far, the IDB has organized seven consultative meetings for both capital-based and Geneva-based officials.

**WTO Specific Technical Assistance to OIC Member Countries:** The IDB also provides specific technical assistance to member countries through hiring consultancy services or fielding in-house WTO experts on vital WTO issues such as: WTO accession, drafting of national laws, establishing WTO Units and providing capacity-building for all general purposes. The current focus of the Program is on three themes: (i) Accession to the WTO (ii) Regional integration and (iii) Negotiation skills.

The major activities organized by the IDB since the 27<sup>th</sup> Session of the COMCEC are the following:

**Table 5: Selected activities of IDB group's -related technical assistance and capacity building organized in WTO since the 27<sup>th</sup> session of the COMCEC**

	<b>Actions/Events</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Observations</b>
1.	<b>Ministerial Consultative Meeting of the OIC MS: The IDB organized a Ministerial Consultative Meeting of the OIC MS</b>	14 December 2011	Geneva, Switzerland	On the eve of the 8 <sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference
2.	<b>Regional Workshop on "Trade Policy Review Mechanism":</b>	30 January - 1 February 2012	Abu Dhabi, UAE	Providing a detailed, step-by-step review of the WTO Trade Policy Review process (TPR),
3.	<b>Seminar on "Non-Agriculture Market Access (NAMA) Negotiations":</b>	13-15 February 2012	Baku, Azerbaijan	Explaining and analyzing all issues pertaining to the ongoing negotiations on NAMA
4.	<b>Seminar on "Doha negotiations and accession process to WTO for the ECO MS: Experience of the Republic of Turkey".</b>	18-20 June 2012	Istanbul, Turkey	Introducing participants to the MTS and the main GATT/WTO principles, provisions, rights and obligations.
5.	<b>Seminar on "Aid for Trade: Leading Towards Poverty Alleviation":</b>	25 - 27 June 2012	Tunis, Tunisia	Discussing and analyzing the role of the IDB Group in the area of Aid for Trade (AFT). Jointly prepared by ITFC, on behalf of IDB Group, in collaboration with UNDP, ITC, UNIDO, UNCTAD, and ILO.

(Source: IDB Reports).

Following the 33<sup>rd</sup> Session of the COMCEC, IDB and ICDT have focused, among other issues, on accession to the WTO and workshops on the impact of the Buenos Aires MC 11 on Member Countries

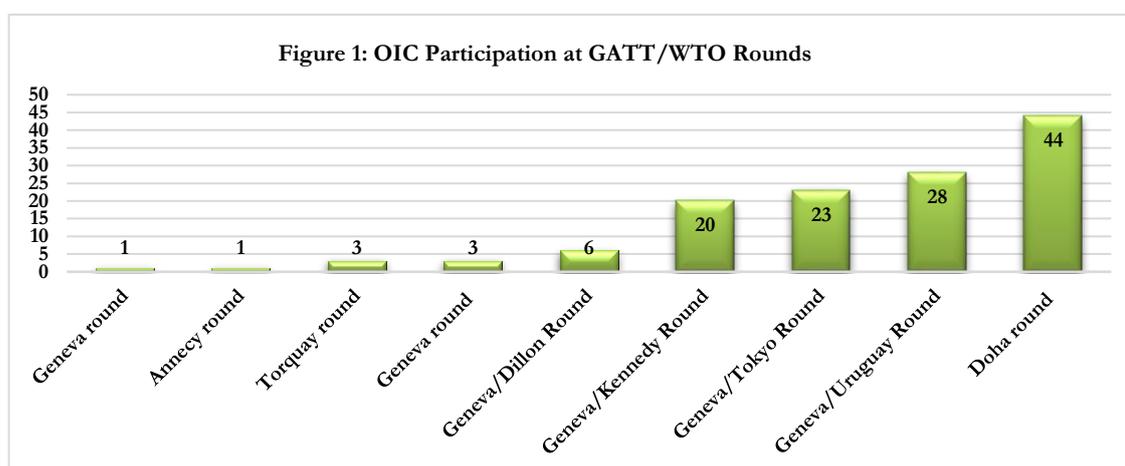
### SECTION III: THE OIC COUNTRIES ACTION IN WTO

There have been nine rounds of multilateral trade talks since the end of the Second World War. The last one and the most committed to development issues, the Doha Round was launched in November 2001.

Table 6: Multilateral Trade Talks since 1947.

Year	Place/name	Subjects covered	Countries	OIC Countries
1947	Geneva	Tariffs	23	1
1949	Annecey	Tariffs	13	1
1951	Torquay	Tariffs	38	3
1956	Geneva	Tariffs	26	3
1960-1961	Geneva Dillon Round	Tariffs	26	6
1964-1967	Geneva Kennedy Round	Tariffs and anti-dumping measures	62	20
1973-1979	Geneva Tokyo Round	Tariffs, non-tariff measures, "framework" agreements	102	23
1986-1994	Geneva Uruguay Round	Tariffs, non-tariff measures, rules, services, intellectual property, dispute settlement, textiles, agriculture, creation of WTO, etc	123	28
2001	Doha	Development Agenda, Agriculture Non-Agricultural Market, Access, Services, Trade Facilitation, Trade and Environment, TRIPs, Development, Dispute Settlement	153	44

This table shows the growing role of developing countries in the WTO negotiations, since the Geneva-Kennedy Round, and more importantly since the Tokyo Round. It suggests that the most power-based international trade regime is starting to be influenced by choices made by weaker developing countries. Consequently, the scope of the WTO extends into more areas of rules and economic activity, and the number of areas in which developing countries need to be 'competitive' is increasing. OIC MS are following the same pattern of behavior as other developing countries. Since the Doha Round, depicted as having an important Development Agenda and focusing on helping developing countries, they have been eager to be WTO Members. Among the most relevant indicators, we shall focus on OIC MS membership in WTO Groups, issues areas of importance and chairmanship of WTO Bodies/Committees.



OIC MS participation at GATT/WTO Rounds has started to be important since the Geneva-Kennedy Round in 1973. It has reached almost a full development with the Doha Round in 2001, with 44 countries being represented.

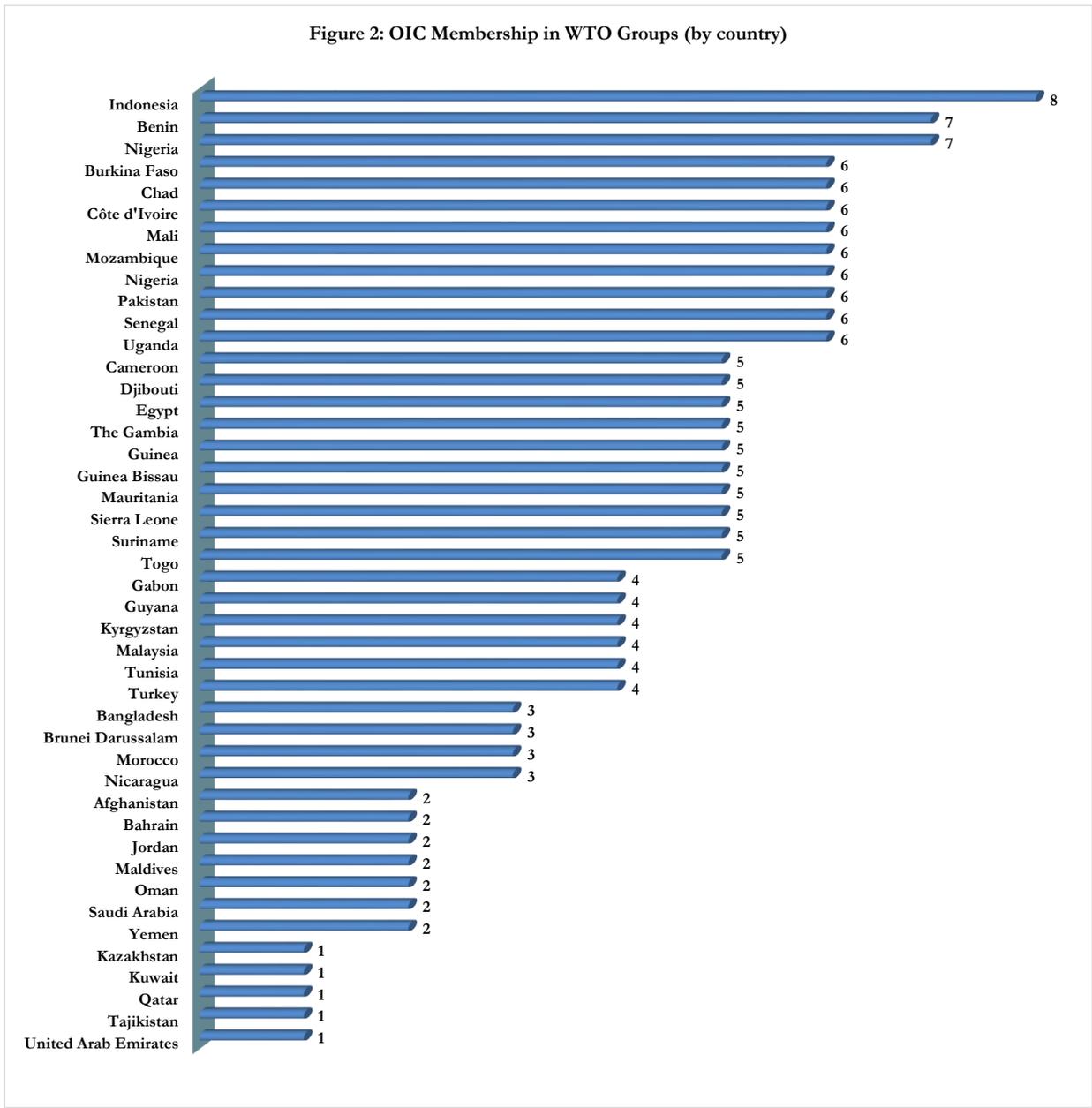
**Table 7: OIC MS Participation at GATT/WTO Rounds since 1973**

<b>GROUPS IN THE WTO</b>	<b>ISSUE</b>	<b>Number of OIC Countries</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>'W52' SPONSORS</b>	Intellectual property (TRIPS)	29	16
<b>G-90</b>	General	28	15
<b>AFRICAN GROUP</b>	Regional-general	22	12
<b>ACP</b>	Preferences	21	12
<b>LEAST-DEVELOPED</b>	General	18	10
<b>ASIAN DEVELOPING MEMBERS</b>	Regional-general	14	8
<b>G-33</b>	Agriculture	12	7
<b>ARTICLE XII MEMBERS</b>	General	7	4
<b>PACIFIC GROUP</b>	General	6	3
<b>G-20</b>	Agriculture	4	2
<b>COTTON-4</b>	Cotton	4	2
<b>'PARAGRAPH 6' COUNTRIES</b>	NAMA	4	2
<b>APEC</b>	Regional-general	3	2
<b>ASEAN</b>	Regional-general	3	2
<b>CAIRNS GROUP</b>	Agriculture	3	2
<b>NAMA-11</b>	NAMA	3	2
<b>SMALL, VULNERABLE</b>	General	1	1
<b>LOW INCOME TRANSITION</b>	Agriculture	1	1
<b>TROPICAL PRODUCTS</b>	Agriculture	1	1
<b>FRIENDS OF A-D NEGOTIATIONS</b>	Rules (anti-dumping)	1	1
<b>FRIENDS OF FISH</b>	Rules (fisheries subsidies)	1	1
<b>JOINT PROPOSAL</b>	TRIPS GI register	1	1
<b>G-10</b>	Agriculture	0	
<b>FRIENDS OF AMBITION (NAMA)</b>	NAMA	0	

Source: WTO computed by the author of the study

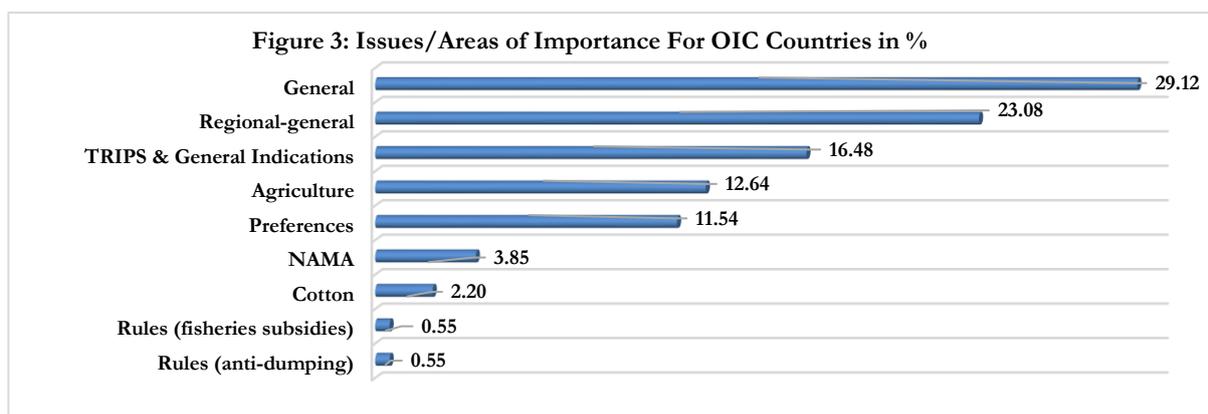
The WTO Groups where we find the most important number of OIC MS are, by order of importance: W52 Sponsors, G-90, African Group, ACP, LDCs, Asian Developing Members, and G-33. These groups are all "Southern Global Coalitions": some are issue-based, some are regional / geographical. While others are characteristic coalitions (see Chapter II)

Figure 2: OIC Membership in WTO Groups (by country)



Source: WTO computed by the author of the study

The most active OIC countries to be members of WTO Groups have been: Indonesia (8 Groups), Nigeria and Benin (7 Groups), Uganda, Senegal, Pakistan, Niger, Mozambique, Mali, Cote d’Ivoire, Chad and Burkina Faso (6 Groups), followed by Togo, Suriname, Sierra Leone, Mauritania, Guinea Bissau, The Gambia, Egypt, Djibouti and Cameroon (5 Groups). Most of these countries are from Africa, ACP or LDCs Groups.



For OIC MS, the priorities are: General and Regional issues, TRIPS and General Indications, Agriculture and Preferences. The others issues (NAMA, Cotton, Rules) are not considered as really important.

**Table 8: Former OIC Chairmanship of WTO Bodies/Committees, 1995-2017**

	1995-2002	2003 -2007	2008-2010	2011-2017	Country TOTAL
<b>Egypt</b>	4	6	3	7	<b>20</b>
<b>Pakistan</b>	3	8	4	7	<b>22</b>
<b>Malaysia</b>	3	4		6	<b>13</b>
<b>Bangladesh</b>	3	3		2	<b>8</b>
<b>Saudi Arabia</b>				6	<b>6</b>
<b>Turkey</b>	3		2	4	<b>9</b>
<b>Indonesia</b>			1	3	<b>4</b>
<b>Nigeria</b>	3	2	3	3	<b>11</b>
<b>Morocco</b>	4			1	<b>5</b>
<b>Uganda</b>	1	1	2	2	<b>6</b>
<b>Senegal</b>	1	2		2	<b>5</b>
<b>Tunisia</b>	2	1		1	<b>4</b>
<b>Cote d'Ivoire</b>	2				<b>2</b>
<b>Gabon</b>	1	2			<b>3</b>
<b>Qatar</b>				1	<b>1</b>
<b>Bahrain</b>				1	<b>1</b>
<b>Oman</b>				2	<b>2</b>
<b>Kazakhstan</b>				1	<b>1</b>
<b>Jordan</b>				1	<b>1</b>
<b>OIC Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>124</b>

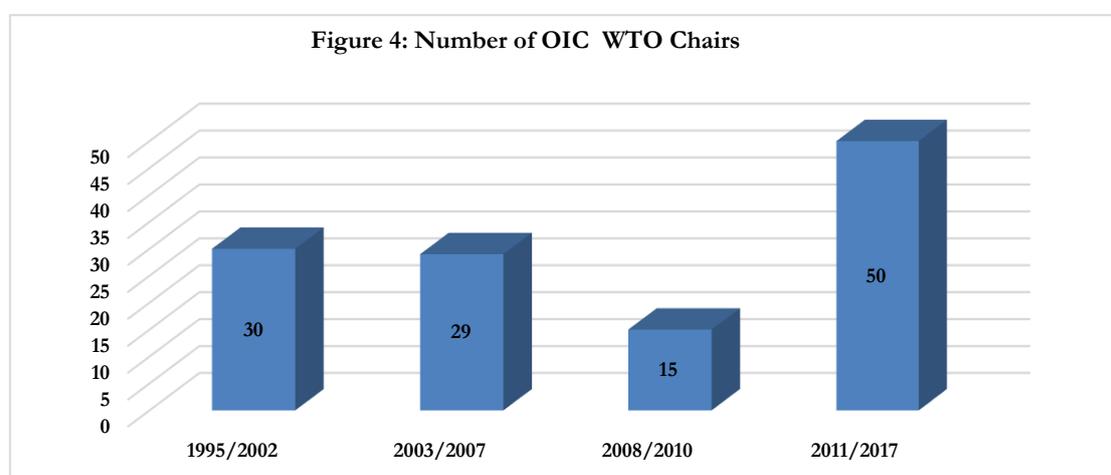
Source: WTO computed by the author of the study

Concerning OIC chairmanship of WTO Committees/ Bodies, since the creation of WTP and until 2017, the ranking is the following: Pakistan, Egypt, followed by Malaysia, Nigeria, Turkey, Bangladesh, and then by Saudi Arabia and Uganda. It is worth mentioning that the trend towards chairing WTO Bodies by OIC Countries has taken a new pace since 2011. Pakistan, Egypt, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia started to be more active especially since that date.

**Table 9: OIC MS Chairmanship of Working Groups.**

Country	Date of the setting up of a working group	Chairman of the working group
Algeria	17 <sup>th</sup> June 1987	Argentina
Azerbaijan	16 <sup>th</sup> July 1997	Germany
Comoros	9 <sup>th</sup> October 2007	Peru
Iraq	13 <sup>th</sup> December 2004	Morocco
Iran	26 <sup>th</sup> May 2005	-
Lebanon	14 <sup>th</sup> April 1999	France
Libya	27 <sup>th</sup> July 2004	Spain
Somalia	7 <sup>th</sup> December 2016	
Sudan	25 <sup>th</sup> October 1994	Japan
Syria	4 <sup>th</sup> May 2010	-
Uzbekistan	21 <sup>st</sup> December 1994	Korea

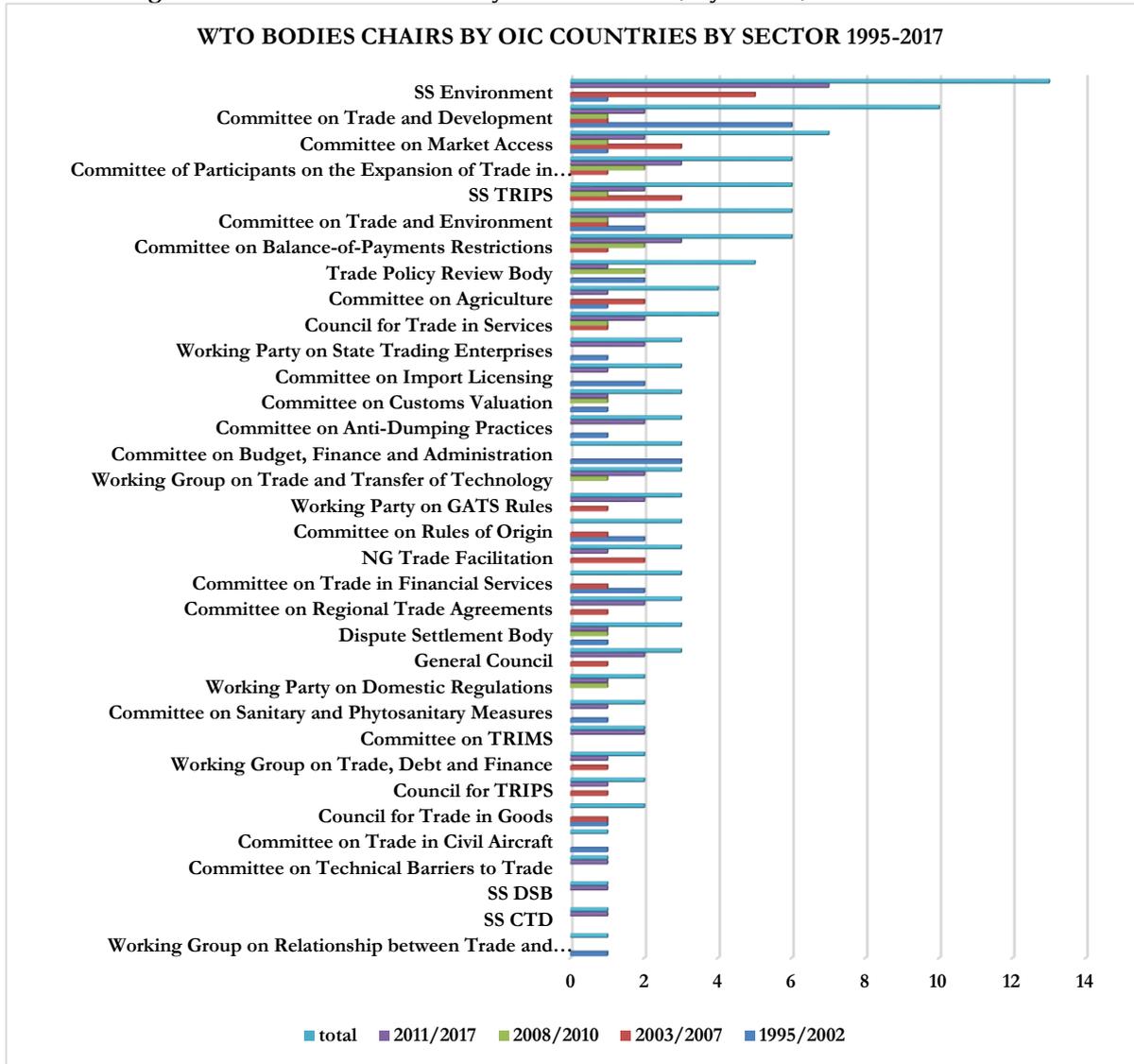
Source: WTO, December 2017



Source: WTO computed by the author of the study

From 1995 to 2007, chairmanship of WTO Bodies by OIC countries has been constant. They became less active from 2008 to 2010. Then again, they have become more active from 2011 on, chairing more than 50 times. The number of WTO chairs by OIC MS has increased considerably.

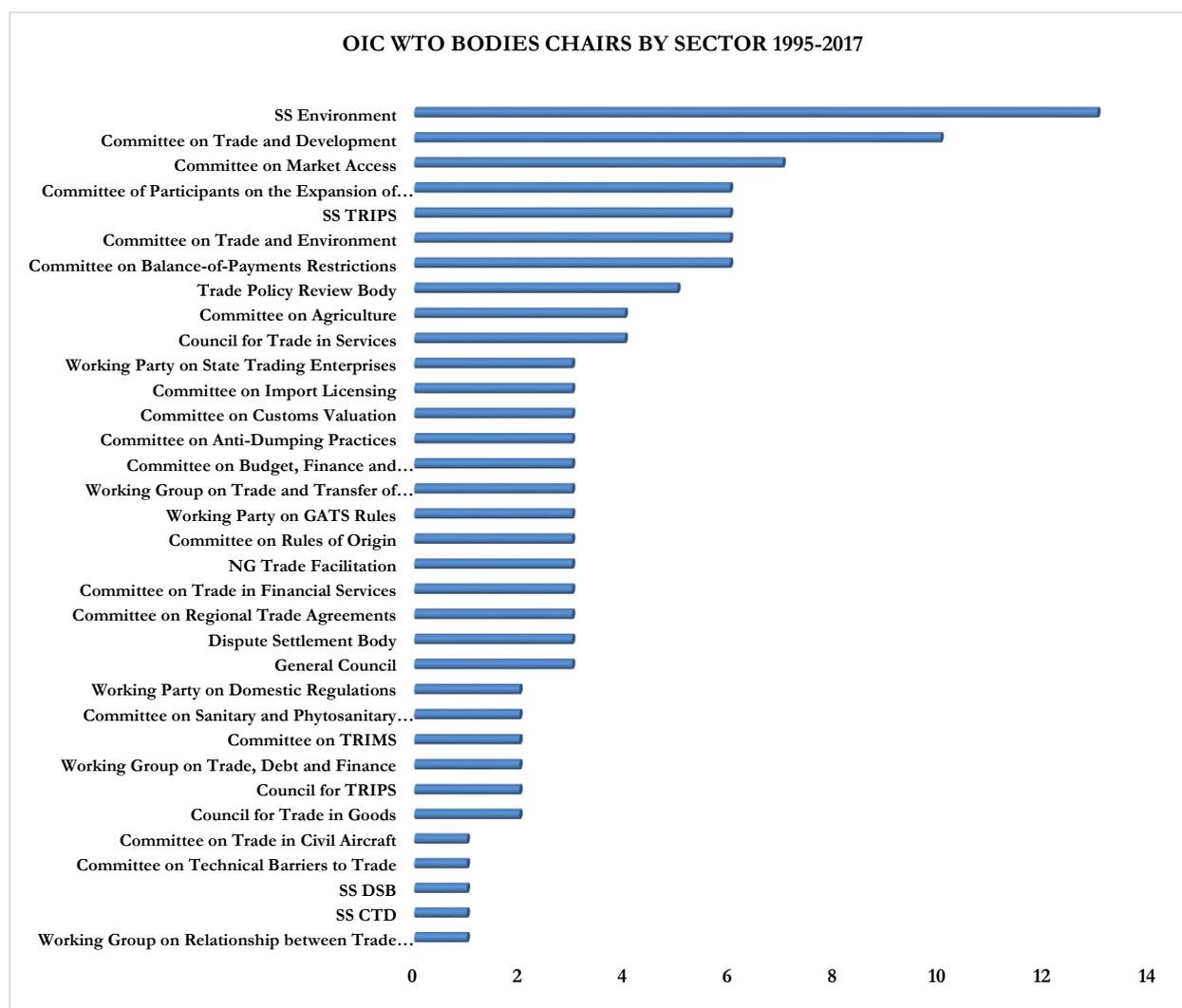
Figure 5: WTO Bodies' Chairs by OIC Countries, by Sector, 1995-2017.



Source: WTO computed by the author of the study

Priority was given by far to chairing the Committee on Trade and Development, the Committee of Participants on the Expansion of Trade in Information and to the Committee on Trade and Environment, etc.

Figure 6: OIC WTO Bodies' Chairs, by Sector, 1995-2017



Source: WTO computed by the author of the study

It might be suggested that the sectors that have been considered as priorities by OIC Countries are: Environment, Trade and Development, Market Access, Expansion of Trade in Information, TRIPS, Trade and Environment, Balance of Payments Restrictions, etc. This might not be always the case; a MS capacity or interest in a sector is not a determining factor for a chairmanship to be accorded. At the WTO, as in any other IO, there are diplomatic traditions, such as chairmanship rotation among different geographical regions.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DYNAMIC OF COALITIONS WITHIN THE WTO

#### **Developing countries' coalitions in the WTO: Strategies for improving the influence of developing countries**

For many developing countries, participation in coalitions with other developing countries as well as in groupings and alliances with developed countries is an increasingly used strategy to boost their influence. It would be very interesting to know: 1) The factors that help coalitions work effectively; 2) The means to help the weakest and poorest WTO Members achieve greater influence through coalitions; 3) The different strategies and tactics needed in the agenda-setting and negotiating phases; 4) The level of resources and energy countries should devote to different kinds of coalitions. (BIRKBECK, C. D., 2011)

#### **Challenges Facing Developing Countries in Multilateral Trade Negotiations**

- A first challenge facing small and poor WTO members in multilateral trade negotiations is their small economic size. Limited political weight, high levels of trade and aid dependence, and the relatively small number of products or services traded internationally mean high vulnerability to external pressures.
- A second set of challenges is a greater influence in their participation in WTO negotiations. Many developing countries are constrained by weaknesses in negotiating strategies and tactics and in mechanisms, as well as poor leadership, poor personal incentives for negotiators, and psychological factors that limit perceived prospects for success in negotiations (JONES et al. 2009).

For developing countries, to be members in one or more coalitions is a tool to overcome the challenges and constraints they face in negotiating and decision-making processes at the WTO, and boost their chances of influencing the agenda and outcomes of WTO negotiations (YU,2011).

1. Coalitions can help countries build negotiating positions and proposals. By pooling resources, countries can gain greater access to technical assistance, share information, and gather more diplomatic and political intelligence.
2. By working together, the market size and political weight of a group of countries is greater than their individual weight.
3. Participation in coalitions can expand the prospect of representation of countries in key forums such as the WTO's "Green Rooms" (the practice of Green Room Meetings has been abolished since September 2013) and other small group meetings.
4. Countries can join coalitions simply to ensure that their specific interests are heard and their profile is raised with trading partners.
5. The growing use of coalitions can be seen as advantageous because it can help build convergence by facilitating learning and reaching compromises (ISMAIL and VICKERS, 2011).
6. The growing use of coalitions was seen (before 2013) as a strategy for transforming the exclusivity of the WTO's "green room" process. (BIRKBECK, C. D., 2011)

The purpose of coalitions varies considerably. Some groups focus on advocacy and lobbying on broad political priorities. Others negotiating groups are willing to advance deal-making

on specific topics. Some groups are single-issue coalitions, whereas others advance a broad set of priorities and political perspectives. Some groups form to respond to a specific threat and dissolve after a certain period. Negotiating strategies also differ between coalitions. The strategy adopted may be defensive (e.g., blocking) or offensive, or it may focus on a single-issue versus a wide variety of crosscutting issues (ODELL, 2006, BIRKBECK, C. D., 2011).

**Table 10: Different Types of Groups/Coalitions**

Regional Groups or Coalitions	Issue Based Coalitions	Groups or Coalitions Based on Common Characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• African Group (AG)</li> <li>• African Caribbean Pacific (ACP) Group</li> <li>• Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)</li> <li>• Caribbean Community (CARICOM)</li> <li>• Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cotton 4</li> <li>• Core Group on Trade Facilitation (CGTF)</li> <li>• G-20</li> <li>• G-33</li> <li>• NAMA-II</li> <li>• Paragraph 6 NAMA Countries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Least Developed Countries (LDCs)</li> <li>• Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)</li> <li>• Small Vulnerable Economies (SVEs)</li> </ul>

Source: YU, Vicente Paolo B., 2008.

## SECTION I: STATE OF PLAY OF COALITIONS AT THE WTO:

With the Doha Round negotiations, a considerable number of new coalitions from the South have emerged, having two characteristics: on the one hand, they are formed exclusively of G77 member countries - a reminder of third world diplomatic activism - and, on the other hand, they almost all already have a longer lifespan than the Uruguay Round coalitions (excluding the Cairns Group). Some scholars have analyzed the organizational dimension of this diplomatic activism of the coalitions of the Global South, and discovered their characteristics of form, number and interactional aspects (AUDET, René, 2009). A broad portrait of the membership of new coalitions uncovers the general dynamics of segmentation of the numerous Global South groups: Like-Minded Group, Group of Friends of the Development Box, G20, G33, NAMA II, C4, African Group, Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Group (ACP), Small Group of Vulnerable Economies (SVE), Least Developed Countries Group (LDCs), G90 and G110.

### SOUTHERN GLOBAL COALITIONS:

The Cancun Conference has marked the demise of the Like-Minded Group and the Group of Friends of the Development Box and allowed the emergence of several new coalitions, including the G20, the G33, the C4 and the G90. But this has not changed the dynamics of large coalitions of more marginalized countries such as the African Group, the ACP Group, the LDC Group and the SVEs Group. (AUDET, René, 2009)

**Issue-based Coalitions:** At the WTO, the Group of 20 and the Cairns Group stand out as those most effective coalitions, reaching consensus mainly because of their shared interests.

**The Like-Minded Group:** This group is a classic bloc, similar in form to the G10. It emerged in the WTO in 1996 as a response to the inclusion of new issues. At the Singapore MC, the group focused on the implementation issues of the Uruguay Round agreements. In preparation for the Doha Conference, the group has included some of the traditional demands of the South.

**The G-10:** It is an effective issue-based coalition (focused on agriculture), involving both developed and developing countries. The group's strengths are its "trade presence" in agriculture, the varied scope of its members and their ability to provide both technical and critical input on negotiating issues.

**The G20 on Agriculture:** The G20 roots are deep, since it has a strong Latin American component, including all MERCOSUR members. This has no doubt favored some cohesion in the group. It emerged before the 5th MC in 2003. Its three leaders are Brazil, India and China. Understanding the deployment of the G20 in Asia and Africa means looking at the growth of trade cooperation between the strategic triangle named IBSA (India-Brazil-South Africa), working since 2000 to develop trilateral agreements that had the effect of propelling trade between these countries to unprecedented levels (TAYLOR, 2007). Moreover, the IBSA members are aiming to use their collective weight to influence the overall agenda in favor of developing countries (WHITE and SKIDMORE, 2004).

Nevertheless, many authors point out that important divides exist within the G20 itself. The most important concerns exporting countries such as Brazil and Argentina who advocate for liberalization of the agricultural sector and importing countries like Mexico and India (NARLIKAR and TUSSIE, 2004; TAYLOR, 2007). Another dividing line is taking shape between the major G20 countries and the smaller ones (Bolivia, Cuba, etc.) who would rather benefit from limiting the opening of their market through a special agreement on agriculture.

The G20 remains a "specific stake bloc" dedicating its efforts and strategy to develop its wide trading agenda, rather than losing members who would feel excluded by a too small agenda. The G-20 consolidated its influence by significantly recasting the agenda of the WTO agriculture negotiations. The weight of the coalition's membership as a whole has helped them to counter pressures on Members to leave the group (YU, 2011, AUDET, René, 2009). But the G20 also faces challenges. The diversity among G-20 members is a factor undermining its potential for cohesion and influence on negotiations. Its effectiveness as a lobbying coalition has proven to be difficult to match when countries are to get involved in binding trade commitments.

**The Cairns Group:** It has been very active since 1986. This coalition of 19 countries lobbying for agricultural trade liberalization is considered as an effective coalition due to its successful internal coordination. This can be attributed to a substantial access to resources, institutional presence, technical expertise, research support and organizational leadership from the Australian government.

**The G33 on Food Security:** This group, developed between 2001 and 2005, came to be known as the "Friends of the Development Box" (NARLIKAR, 2003). In Cancun, the group was set up and claimed clauses on Special Products and the Special Safeguard Mechanism in the Agreement on Agriculture that followed. In July 2004, these issues became important on the negotiating agenda. The joining of India and China in 2003 was undoubtedly a crucial element in its upswing. It was certainly the negotiations on the agriculture subsector that derailed the Doha Round in 2008.

**The Cotton Four (C4):** It is also an issue-based coalition dedicated to a subsector of agriculture negotiations. In the wake of a complaint filed by Brazil against the USA on cotton subsidies, four West African countries tabled a negotiating proposal in May 2003 to speed up the cotton negotiations and quickly abolish the policies of distorting world markets. These four countries in question - LDCs with few diplomatic resources - were assisted by the Geneva-based non-governmental organization IDEAS Center. Providing expertise enabled these countries to exploit the possibilities inherent in the legal and procedural mechanisms provided by WTO membership (CANET and AUDET 2005, AUDET, CANET and DUCHASTEL 2006). The trend to combine individual efforts to

advocate cutting cotton subsidies gave the issue greater political weight. The initiative also gained successful support from ACP countries, African States and other LDCs, as well as from emerging States such as Argentina, Brazil and India and groups such as the G20, the G90 and the Cairns Group.

**NAMA II:** This coalition was set up at the Hong Kong MC as a reaction against any ambitious opening of the southern markets for industrial and manufactured products and commodities. Therefore, it turned out to be like a complementary group to the G20, linking the progress of negotiations on industrial commodities to the success of the negotiations in agriculture.

**The ACP Group:** The group was established in 1975 by the Lomé Convention between the ACP countries and the EU. In 2000, the Cotonou Agreement was signed, establishing the basis for economic cooperation between the two groups and providing a framework for the gradual withdrawal of preferential agreements granted to ACP countries. Although the group is involved in negotiating issues in the Doha Round, it is focusing on the issue of preference erosion.

**The Tropical Products Group:** It is made up of Latin American countries which consider that the trade preferences granted to members of the ACP Group harm some of their members' exports of agricultural products. Thanks to the bargaining process, a compromise was reached at the July 2008 Geneva mini- ministerial meeting.

#### **REGIONAL GROUPINGS AND COALITIONS:**

There is a wide range of active regional groupings at the WTO, the formalized being certainly the EU. No other regional economic group negotiates as a single entity at the WTO (BIRKBECK, C. D., 2011). Strengths of regional groups can derive from commonalities of histories, cultures and/or similar development levels (NARLIKAR, 2004). Weaknesses may be the result of divergent member interests, overlapping membership in competing coalitions, and limited experience in coordination.

**The Caribbean Region:** These small States have relatively effective regional coordination for trade negotiations (JONES et al 2010). CARICOM has been active in multilateral trade negotiations since 1997 through the CARICOM Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM). The 12 members of CRNM negotiate in most of WTO issues, while focusing on the need for special and differential treatment for small economies in the agriculture sector. The CRNM provides policy advice and leads the region's negotiating team, which comprises CRNM technical officials, 12 ambassadors and senior officials from MS, as well as independent experts. "In the absence of clear positions from MS, there have been concerns that the CRNM and wider negotiating team have had to rely on their own discretion and views in formulating negotiating positions and strategies." (BIRKBECK, C. D., 2011)

**The African Group:** This group comes from an inter-state organization of a political nature: the African Union. It formed on the basis of a free trade agreement and it had to face internal economic competition. In the case of Africa, the common interests put forward have surpassed internal competition (LEE, 2007). Moreover, the African Group often discusses issues with the ACP Group. Established in 1997 and currently having a membership of 42 states, the African Group generally rotates the task of leadership and coordination among members, selects "focal points" to take charge of suggesting, formulating and organizing group positions and actions (YU, 2011). Its influence is rather limited to broad political matters, and does not extend to specific issues. The group can achieve some internal

consensus because members try to avoid conflicts within the group; broad statements are not always a true reflection of the position of the whole group. (BIRKBECK, C. D., 2011)

To address challenges of limited individual capacity and the costs associated with establishing or boosting representation in Geneva, some regional groups of developing countries have established offices or secretariats in Geneva, sometimes with the support of developed country donors. The ACP group, the African Union, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), and the Pacific Islands Forum all have offices in Geneva. (BIRKBECK, C. D., 2011)

**The Small Vulnerable Economies Group:** The SVE can be considered a "de facto" bloc since 2001. Its members share specific conditions and challenges that distinguish them even from the LDCs and this makes "special and differential treatment particularly important for them" (NARLIKAR, 2003). This issue-based group has three different sub-groups dedicated to different issues, one on Agriculture (14 members); one on NAMA (19 members); and one on Rules (14 members). Focal point coordinators are designated by the coalition to follow particular issues and attend issue-specific meetings. The group faces "challenges of coordination and leadership", including problems of uneven participation in meetings, inadequate follow-up communication, etc. Still, it has achieved some success, advocating for the inclusion of SVEs as a particular category of countries in the Doha Round negotiations (BIRKBECK, C. D., 2011).

**The Least Developed Countries Group:** It constitutes a "de facto" bloc organized at the WTO. This title was given by the UN to 50 countries meeting specific criteria. 32 LDCs are members of the WTO. The UNCTAD formed the LDC Group in preparation for the Seattle Conference in 1999. Still, they play little part in the Global South's diplomatic activism. Most LDCs are also members of the ACP Group or the African Group. Therefore, they join their voices in these last two coalitions in G90 proposals, communications and statements.

#### **CHARACTERISTIC-BASED COALITIONS:**

The effectiveness of very large and broad characteristic-based coalitions, such as the G-77/China, the G-90 and the G110, is considered very high when they focus on political statements and advocate on broad principles, such as the development priorities in the Doha Round. When some groups based on common characteristics take strong positions on specific issues, they can also achieve some success. For example, the LDC Group has been a useful vehicle for boosting the "legitimacy of specific negotiating objectives such as attention to special and differential treatment for LDCs". (BIRKBECK, C. D., 2011)

**The G90 and G110** are big blocks, a new type of coalitions, allowing the North-South and Third-World logic to resurface. The G90, a coalition of the LDC Group, the African Group and the ACP Group, appeared for the first time in Cancun. The G110 is an even larger coalition (G90 + G20 + G33) that emerged at the Hong Kong Conference.

More specifically, on the level of coordination, "within the LDC group, leadership is rotated among group members that are willing and able to provide the necessary human, administrative, and logistical resources in their missions in Geneva. Typically, the Ambassador of the country acting as the coordinator, supported by their Geneva-based staff, takes responsibility for the organization of group meetings and the task of coordinating the overall actions and positions of MS. The LDC group also selects "issue focal points" that are willing and able to take the lead on specific negotiating issues. The selected country then assigns one of its technical experts or delegates in the Geneva mission

“to take charge of suggesting, formulating and organizing group positions and actions” (YU, 2011).

## SECTION II: CHALLENGES FACING DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN THEIR ENGAGEMENT WITH COALITIONS

The highest effectiveness of developing countries coalitions remains the ultimate impact on negotiations. “Being noticed, heard and taken seriously in international negotiations” can be an achievement for the foreign policy of countries, going far beyond trade issues. (BIRKBECK, C. D., 2011) Common problems that hinder collective thinking, action and/or the efficiency of a coalition may include language barriers among the delegates, lack of clear instructions for delegates from capitals, lack of sufficient expertise to ensure suitable representation. But, more serious threats can face the practice of coalitions among developing countries at large; among others, scholars have singled out the following challenges:

**Inadequate Resources and Expertise:** It is necessary for member countries to have knowledge of the issues being discussed and their implications on national interests. Coalitions lacking expertise and analytical capacity often find it difficult to make an effective contribution to negotiations.

**Diversity and Divergent Interests within Groups:** Divergent interests, asymmetries in power and influence within groups can be significant. Many scenarios are possible. The position of smaller countries is compromised as a result of being involved in a coalition. If negotiators lack the necessary knowledge on certain issues they may even oppose proposals beneficial for their country or support disadvantageous decisions. (BIRKBECK, C. D., 2011)

**Appropriate Size of Coalitions:** A great heterogeneity of interests in large groups can make it difficult to forge a shared agenda and agree on concessions. In such cases, shared ideals, values and goals, strong institutional frameworks and arrangements, a clear leadership can bind the coalition and foster cooperation. (BIRKBECK, C. D., 2011)

**Effective Leadership and Representation:** “The dynamics of group leadership can yield differential benefits for members of coalitions and impact the group’s influence on negotiations.” Recorded evidence shows that the most successful small States operated individually and managed to bring the weight of a group behind them. (BIRKBECK, C. D., 2011).

**Internal Coordination and Accountability:** Internal decision-making processes and information-flow of a negotiating group are decisive factors of efficiency. Issue-specific focal points have to devote considerable energy to informing and lobbying within the group. (BIRKBECK, C. D., 2011)

**Challenges Facing Coalitions at Different Stages of Negotiations:** Some coalitions suffer from lack of attention and high-level political involvement, inadequate briefing of ministers, and representatives with inadequate levels of political knowledge and expertise. Diplomats from developed countries often are uncertain about the most appropriate contact within developing countries coalitions and about the setting of top priorities, making it difficult to negotiate and forge deals (BIRKBECK, C. D., 2011).

**Challenges to Engagement with More Powerful States and Coalitions:** Power asymmetries do exist inside coalitions. Scholars have recorded that “even where a large number of developing countries combine resources, they may still find themselves

overwhelmed by the technical expertise and economic power of a far smaller coalition of developed countries” (BIRKBECK, C. D., 2011).

### **SECTION III: COORDINATION THROUGH SOME SELECTED WTO GROUPS:**

In this section, we shall focus on the following groups: Arab Countries Group, African Group, ASEAN Countries Group and ACP Group.

#### **(A) ARAB COUNTRIES GROUP:**

Before 2006, there was no coordination body or mechanism for the Arab countries to voice a common position in the Doha negotiations. In 2006 (June 20th), under the leadership of Egypt, the Arab countries decided to join together in the WTO in order to better coordinate their positions in the Doha Round negotiations. The Egyptian Trade Minister declared in a meeting in Cairo that “having an Arab group was something new”. The announcement of the creation of this group was to be officially transmitted to WTO DG Pascal Lamy in Geneva, a week later. The group would include the 12 Arab countries already members of the WTO: Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates. Six other countries had observer status in the WTO at the time, without the right to vote: Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Sudan and Yemen. While Palestine was invited as an ad hoc observer. They were to be included within the new group for the purposes of consultations.

A major hindrance facing Arab countries’ full participation in the work of the WTO is insufficient human resources, linked with the lack of technical expertise and the availability of competent staff. Arab countries representation in the WTO is limited to a single or a handful of officials. Moreover, delegations of Arab countries in Geneva do not cover the work of the WTO exclusively, but they also participate in other Geneva-based organizations such as the UN and its specialized agencies: UNCTAD, WIPO, ITU (International Telecommunication Union), and IOS (International Organization for Standardization). Egypt, with its ten professional staff members, had the largest delegation among Arab countries.

Currently, only 13 Arab countries are members of the WTO (Yemen has joined in 2014), and 7 have acquired the status of observers and are considered as countries in the process of accession. However, the visibility of Arab countries at the WTO remains relatively low, particularly due to their insufficient participation in the WTO work, and the indifference of their national business communities towards some of the WTO salient subjects, such as negotiations on agricultural trade, market access, trade in services, intellectual property matters, sanitary and phytosanitary controls, trade facilitation, etc.

To this end, the Arab Group in Geneva has requested support from the AFTIAS program to set up a team of technical experts in Geneva (Technical Support Team, TST), to provide technical and advisory assistance to the Arab Group. The International Trade Centre (ITC) was selected as the implementing agency of this project because of its technical support potential and its efforts to promote regional integration and intraregional trade in the Arab region. ITC is expected to provide the required support to the TST by enabling the access to the needed expertise, the institutional knowledge as well as the wide range of ITC’s tools (Source: ITC web site on AFTIAS 20/10/2016).

## **(B) AFRICAN GROUP:**

For our benchmark, the African Group is probably the most appropriate case to study. The participation of African countries individually in the previous GATT rounds till the Uruguay Round was very low to non-existent. With the exception of a few African countries, the vast majority were essentially "absent" or non-participatory. The engagement of African WTO Members in the Doha Round negotiations has manifested in specific forms. Some facts and data collected by scholars need to be mentioned here.

1. African Members have been active in working through 18 basic coalitions in the Doha Round negotiations.
2. Most African Members' engagement has been through the AG, LDCs' Consultative Group and the ACP Group to which most of them belong.
3. These coalitions range across priority areas of interest for them: Special development needs for LDCs and non-LDC vulnerable Members, targeted reform and liberalization, agriculture, cotton, NAMA, flexibility and protection for development purposes, trade facilitation, and intellectual property.

Since the Uruguay Round, African countries are beginning to realize that they have to be active in the negotiations process to protect their interests. Several countries in the region have been relatively more active in the Doha Round negotiations, have formed alliances with other developing countries to increase their bargaining power and have adopted a strategic approach to trade which ensures that their participation in the Doha Round reforms does not jeopardize the achievement of key national development goals (PATRICK, N., 2006). The AG is an informal group of Geneva-based African trade negotiators established at the end of the Uruguay Round to enable African countries pool their limited human resources together and protect their common interests in multilateral trade negotiations. This has increased the bargaining power of its members in the negotiations and has allowed effective alliances to protect Africa's interests in specific aspects of the negotiations (PATRICK, N., 2006).

Unlike the ACP which is more focused on the GSP and the EPAs, the African Union (AU) has more interaction with the WTO. It is acting as a forum of economic negotiations that contribute to the preparation of the African Declaration for the Ministerial Conference of the WTO. It is important to differentiate between the AU and the AG in the WTO. The AU supports the AG in logistics, and other related fields when requested. Therefore, the AU is showing its interest and following closely WTO issues (AMDY FALL, Amadou, 2015).

### **1. Institutional setting of the Group:**

**Genesis of the African Group at the WTO:** In the aftermath of the WTO agreement, most African delegations felt the need to join forces and take strong and unified positions. Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria and Senegal took the lead by forming a first coalition of four countries who joined later other African delegations in their meetings and the elaboration of common positions. The coordination of the AG at the WTO started in 1995. There is no founding act of the AG. It could be defined as an informal group of African WTO member delegations that participate in multilateral trade negotiations to defend Africa's trade and development interests. It is composed of African heads of delegations supported by technical advisers in the field. The majority of African delegations to the WTO currently have a Permanent Mission to the UN and to the WTO in Geneva (BIZUMUREMYI, E., 2005).

**Work methods:** The AG has a rotating coordination of one year. Currently, it has been coordinated by Rwanda, Nigeria and Egypt from August 2005 until the Hong Kong MC.

The Group is represented by the Ambassador of the coordinating country to other delegations and groups. He represents the Group's position in the Trade Negotiations Committee, in the General Council and in any other appropriate forum, including in informal meetings. The Group holds meetings (including Tuesday's weekly meeting) to discuss issues of common concern or to make decisions on issues of differing interests (BIZUMUREMYI, E., 2005).

**African Group process and decision-making:** The AG's decision-making is done by consensus at the ambassadorial meeting. If a delegation is awaiting the capital to make a decision, the Group coordinator will continue consultations to this end. Depending on the delicacy of the subject, the process can be long or short. While some topics can be addressed for the first time with immediate decision, others can be debated first at the level of the experts before being submitted to the Ambassadors for adoption (BIZUMUREMYI, E., 2005).

**Elaboration of the negotiating positions:** The elaboration of the Group's position is a technical and political process that strengthens the Group. The declaration of the African Trade Ministers on the negotiations is the starting point. In recent years, the agenda of the ministers' meeting also includes the issue related to the WTO negotiations. The end of the meeting is sanctioned by a declaration with an annex including negotiating objectives and possible positions. To take a much more supported position, the Ministers can meet in the framework of the G-90 Group. It is on the basis of the positions taken by the Ministers that the Ambassadors of the African countries in Geneva engage in the negotiations. Technically, the Ambassadors are supported by their advisors. According to the rhythm of the four negotiations, the advisers translate in technical terms the position taken by the Ministers. It can be a long-term job given the complexity and the multitude of topics in negotiations in view of the weak capacity of the Permanent Missions of Africa in Geneva. To overcome the individual weaknesses of Permanent Missions, the Group appoints a focal point on each topic under negotiation, who is supposed to master all the aspects of the subject, to articulate the Group's position and to guide the Group throughout the negotiation process. Vice-versa, the focal point shall take due account of the views expressed by the members. As an example, in West Africa, the focal point of the AG on Cotton was the Ambassador of Benin (BIZUMUREMYI, E., 2005).

**Mandate and scope of expertise of the African Group:** The AG's mandate is a practice rather than a constituent instrument. The negotiating mandate therefore falls within the ministerial declaration. The AG has the negotiating power on all matters under negotiation at the WTO. The Group is actively involved in all stages of negotiations until the conclusion of the negotiating package is submitted to the MC. Ambassadors from individual countries are in constant contact with their capitals on substantive issues under negotiation (BIZUMUREMYI, E., 2005).

**Dealing with the different interests within the Group:** The AG MS have different levels of development (LDCs, SVEs, advanced developing countries). Some countries are net food importers while others are net food exporters. Some are beneficiaries of long-standing preferences under the "Cotonou Partnership Agreement" or under EBA, while others do not benefit or have signed bilateral agreements with major trade partners. Tariff structures also differ from country to country. Therefore, the needs and concerns of African countries, in their specificities, are not always easy to reflect in a common negotiating position. However, the desire to preserve unity still prevails. The Group always finds a compromise on these

issues of divergence. This requires a long-term work by "experts" as well as a relatively permanent contact with capitals to reach a consensus.

**Elaboration of priorities agenda of the negotiating topics:** The elaboration of the order of priorities of the negotiating topics is not an easy task, considering the fact that there are divergent interests within the members of the WTO. The AG must take into account the interests of other groups and delegations. It is actually about developing priorities according to a "give and take" logic.

The elaboration of the priorities of the negotiating topics in the WTO is a complex undertaking that requires consultations with/within different groups, agents, delegations, etc. It is also a process of exercising power in view of the fact that bargaining interests diverge within WTO members. Given the overall agenda of the negotiations, the AG defines its own priorities first and then, as consultations proceed, all members are able to reach consensus on negotiating priorities.

The priority of the AG is the dimension of development. The AG also prioritizes the overall negotiating agenda. The most illustrative case is post-Cancun. A few months after the failure of Cancun, negotiations began under the leadership of the President of the General Council to agree on a number of topics on which negotiations should focus. Four themes were advanced: Agriculture, Cotton, NAMA and Singapore topics. The AG insisted that two elements be included, namely development topics and services. (BIZUMUREMYI, E., 2005)

Unlike other African groups in the UN, the AG at the WTO is a technical group whose mandate emanates from the Trade Ministries of the member countries. Meetings of Trade Ministers of the AU are regularly held to review the AG's positions on the various issues and to adopt common positions before turning them into trade negotiation of the AU.

## **2. Coordination in practice:**

**The Doha Round Multilateral Trade Negotiations:** The level of engagement has been relatively higher in the Doha negotiations. African countries approached the Doha Round negotiations as a development issue. The level of African WTO Member's engagement/participation in the Doha Round was therefore relatively higher than in previous rounds, partly because it was perceived as an opportunity to correct imbalances resulting from the Uruguay Round.

Negotiating weaknesses were corrected through regional group and issue-specific coalitional behavior. Of the 42 African Members of the WTO, it is observed that only a limited number of them have been relatively active mainly in the Doha negotiations and to varying degrees in regular WTO committees and dispute settlement. With the exception of the "traditionally" active African Members from the GATT era that have remained active in the WTO, some of the observed features of the relatively more active African Members include: having a dedicated mission; a specially accredited ambassador to the WTO; a tight Geneva-capital coordination and support; a personal commitment and professional engagement of individual delegates; being coordinators of groups (African Group, ACP Group or LDCs Group); a record of high competitiveness ranking; specific commercial interest to pursue.

**Synthetic positions of the African Group on major issues:** The observed priority areas of African WTO Members as highlighted in their statements included development issues and special and differential treatment; agriculture and cotton, trade and non-trade solutions preference erosion as a result of market access obligations for preference granting countries;

solutions to address non-tariff barriers, implementation of special priority for LDCs in the services negotiations; trade facilitation; and transparency and inclusiveness in the negotiating process (APERCU, Joan, 2013). The AG's position on key issues in negotiations can be summarized as follows:

**With regard to Agriculture**, the Group's priority interests are:

- (a) **Export competition:** the elimination of export subsidies; appropriate flexibilities for LDCs and net food-importing developing countries in accordance with paragraph 4 of the Marrakesh Decision; the operational disciplines on food aid taking into account development objectives and not causing harm to the national branches of production while ensuring the accessibility of food aid to needy countries at the best possible times.
- (b) **Access to market:** the issue of special products and the emergency safeguard measure, the treatment of preference erosion as well as the exemption from commitment reduction for LDCs.
- (c) **Domestic support:** Substantial reduction in order to its elimination of supports that distort trade. (BIZUMUREMYI, E., 2005)

**Regarding Cotton**, the position of the AG is simple and clear: the negotiations on cotton must be ambitious, fast, and specific as stipulated in the "July Framework". The trade and development aspects must be complementary. The subcommittee on cotton should be effective in achieving these goals.

**With regard to NAMA:**

- (a) **A formula for the reduction of customs duties** including SDT (Special and Differential Treatment), and less than total reciprocity; granting sufficient flexibilities to developing countries;
- (b) **Solutions to problems** caused by **preference erosion;**
- (c) **Appropriate treatment of NTBs.**

**On Services:**

- (a) **Market access:** Revised offers from developed countries including modes and sectors of interest for African exports; professional services, tourism, etc.
- (b) **Development dimension:** particularly with regard to strengthening national capabilities in trade in services including through technology transfer; targeted technical assistance aimed at conducting a national assessment of the services sector with a view to submitting offers taking into account the offensive and defensive interests.
- (c) **At the level of the GATS rules**, the AG intended to have clear provisions on the Emergency Safeguard Mechanism as well as subsidies. (BIZUMUREMYI, E., 2005)

**On Trade Facilitation:** the AG supported the principle and implementation of the increased acceleration of movement and clearance of goods, but stressed the need for technical and financial assistance to strengthen national customs capacities of developing countries, especially the seven LDCs, particularly with regard to the modernization of infrastructure and customs procedures.

**Regarding Special and Differential Treatment:** This issue was considered as an integral part of the negotiations. This is why it was urgent to conduct "needs assessments" at the national level before concluding the modalities. The AG considered that the 28 proposals that were the subject of an agreement in principle before Cancun did not include commercial gains. The Group insisted on the respect of the Doha mandate, in paragraph 44, to make

more precise, more effective and more operational all the provisions relating to special and differential treatment (BIZUMUREMYI, E., 2005).

**Challenges of Effective Participation:** What is important here is to look at trade policies in relation to market access conditions (Trade facilitation is an important element of the Doha agenda, offering promise through its contribution to lower trade costs), to emphasize a variety of constraints that arise in this regard. These include the identification of national negotiating positions through a variety of analytical and consultative processes, and the challenges of implementation.

These issues are closely linked to capacity constraints of various kinds, ranging from the supply of human capital to the adequacy of the infrastructure necessary to underpin success in competitive trading environments. These include domestic challenges associated with effective participation in the MTS; coordination and identification of national and continent-wide negotiating positions; challenges of implementation and challenge of putting in place the necessary policies and infrastructure for an effective trading regime.

A key challenge in Africa's participation in the MTS is the ability to articulate its negotiating position in an analytical and consultative manner. When negotiating as a group, it is difficult at times to address divergent views and interests of the 42 African WTO Members while maintaining unity.

The AU office in Geneva as well as the Geneva Liaison Office of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) participate actively in the WTO AG meetings and provide both technical and political assistance and guidance. The ECA has provided significant technical expertise and analysis on the negotiations and their potential impact on African economies (LOW, Patrick, MCHUMO, Zainab and MUYAMBO, Vonai, 2006).

### **3. Assessment of the Group:**

**Africa's Participation in the Multilateral Trading System:** During the Uruguay Round, African countries, suffering from many constraints, were faced with the challenge of articulating their positions as well as understanding the implications of the Agreements. There was also a lack of coordination on trade matters within governmental institutions. Furthermore, a number of African countries did not have diplomatic representations in Geneva. Although some of these constraints still exist today, Africa's participation continues to improve significantly on the level of coordination not only with respect to African officials in Geneva but more importantly at the level of Ministers.

Since their first meeting in Harare in 1998, African Ministers of Trade continued to meet in order to coordinate and strategize on their common negotiating objectives. At the Ministerial level, African countries have been meeting more often and usually in preparation for WTO MC. African Trade Ministers met in Harare in 1998 under the auspices of the OAU/ECA to prepare for the 2nd WTO MC in Geneva. The meeting was a result of the recognition by Ministers, of the need for Africa to be more active in trade negotiations and to be better prepared by defining its interests. It was necessary for Africa to be more proactive as opposed to merely reacting to the proposals of others.

In 1999, African Trade Ministers met again, this time in Algiers to prepare an African negotiating position on the 3rd WTO MC in Seattle. Many papers and articles have been written on Africa's participation in Seattle. It is worth noting that Africa's participation in WTO MCs continues to increase. At the level of officials in Geneva, African participation in the WTO is mainly through the WTO African Group. The WTO AG meets at least once a

week to discuss WTO issues, prepare proposals, and exchange views on ways to increase Africa's participation in the WTO negotiations.

It has become an important forum for the discussion and development of African trade policy and has contributed to strengthening the technical capacity of African countries to participate in the negotiations. Due to the fore mentioned limited human and financial resources in the majority of African Missions in Geneva, the AG developed a system of Focal Points whereby an individual country takes the lead in a particular subject. The use of Focal Points has proved very effective and ensures that Africa is always represented in the various meetings. Some of the main focal points were from Egypt (agriculture), Benin (cotton), Morocco (services and trade facilitation), Kenya (development and NAMA) and Nigeria (TRIPS).

The Focal Points make periodic reports to the African Ambassadors and are usually the ones who initiate proposals, arrange meetings with other delegations as well and organize briefing sessions and workshops with other organizations such as UNCTAD, South Center, etc. The mandate of the AG is the one set by African Trade Ministers in their annual meetings as well as in extraordinary sessions held in preparation for WTO MCs. Despite its engagement in trade negotiations, the AG still faced serious challenges in integrating into the negotiations and international trade, and had to focus on three elements:

**(a) Strengthening the negotiating capacity of the Permanent Missions in Geneva:**

International Geneva is home to so many international political activities in various fields, so that the few African delegates cannot cover all of them. The human resource constraints are such that few permanent missions in Geneva have enough human resources committed totally to the WTO negotiations. The topics being negotiated are both numerous and complex (the Doha Work Program covers 21 subjects), African delegates fail to acquire expertise specific to a given subject, in addition to not being supported by their colleagues in the capital. There is also the obvious risk of power asymmetry in terms of knowledge and argumentation. It is therefore important that the African Missions be strengthened in terms of personnel in order to better participate in the multilateral trade negotiations.

**(b) National negotiating committee and structural strengthening and institutionalization of the collaboration between the Permanent Mission of Geneva and the capital:**

The outcome of trade negotiations can affect all national interests. It is therefore important to set up a well-structured national negotiating committee, in order to better analyze and take a position on the various topics under negotiation in close collaboration with colleagues in Geneva. This capital-based team would include officials from Ministries with links to trade, private sector and civil society agents, academics, etc. Coordination and negotiation require also prior academic research. Such a Geneva-Capital political and technical coordination would allow to define interests and realistic goals and to formulate technically valid positions.

**(c) Strengthening production and supply capacities:**

Negotiating rules should go hand in hand with building trade capacity. It should be reminded that the Doha Declaration underlines the important role of "well-targeted and sustainably funded technical assistance and capacity building programs". The weak trade capacity of African countries, particularly LDCs, is an impediment to their development. Development partners need to redouble their efforts in support of trade promotion initiatives to be integrated into the development strategies.

Nevertheless, despite its limits and the ups and downs, the AG still exerts a great influence in the WTO, especially when members of the Group speak with one voice on one issue. This power is even superior when the Group adds its unanimous voice to that of other groups within the G-90. For example, their strong support for the cotton issue continues to play a role to keep cotton on the DDA negotiations.

The AG continues to actively defend the translation into reality of this dimension of development. This commitment should lead the AG to the establishment of a “development box” in the WTO and its being proactive as a leader in the definition of the elements of this box. But Africa's real integration into multilateral trade negotiations and international trade depends more on institutional and human capacity-building as well as trade capacity building. Donors and development institutions have an important role to play. Finally, ownership of all national projects is crucial to addressing all of these challenges facing Africa. (BIZUMUREMYI, E., 2005)

Figure 7: African Group Structure



From: ARSENE M. BALIHUTA

Unlike the ACP Group, which is more focused on the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) and the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), the AG and AU have more interaction with the WTO. The AU is a forum of economic negotiations that contributes to the preparation of the African Declaration for the MC of the WTO, and supports the AG in logistics, and other related help when requested. Therefore, the AU marks its interest and follows closely these WTO issues. (AMDY FALL, Amadou, 2015)

**(C) ASEAN COUNTRIES GROUP:**

The WTO Groups are vehicles for coordinating and consolidating negotiation positions in order to enhance the pursuit of their national economic interests within the Doha Round negotiations. Here, we shall describe the way ASEAN members have collectively, and individually as members of various other RISCs (Regional and Issue Specific Coalitions) adapted to the new rules of interaction between developing countries and the multilateral trade negotiations. Malaysia, for instance, has often played the role of representing ASEAN as a group within the informal Green Room processes under which select countries sought to develop negotiating frameworks acceptable by the WTO Membership as a whole, whether on specific issues or on the overall round of trade negotiations.

**1. Institutional Setting of the Group:**

ASEAN was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, by the Founding Fathers, namely: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Brunei Darussalam

joined in 1984, Vietnam in 1995, Laos and Myanmar in 1997, and Cambodia in 1999. In Geneva, the members divide assignments for coordinating WTO issues/committees (TRIPs, trade facilitation, etc.) and, when agreed, the coordinating country conveys the collective ASEAN view. The number of countries assigned to an issue/committee is either one or two, and the assignment is for a minimum of one year. Responsibility for coordinating work of the General Council, in contrast, is rotated each six months.

There is an ASEAN Geneva Committee which meets formally at least twice a year, and holds informal weekly meetings (at Ambassador level) in one of the WTO rooms, supplemented by frequent ad hoc coordination meetings to discuss particular issues. A relatively large proportion of the ASEAN coordination activities take place in Geneva. The ASEAN MS also divide up responsibility for coordinating other Geneva activities (human rights, ILO, WHO, UNCTAD/UN reforms, etc.)

To facilitate the coordination of ASEAN's positions on the various Doha Round negotiating topics, ASEAN MS began even prior to the Doha Round to hold weekly coordination meetings in which an overall coordinator presided over sub-coordinators responsible for each of the various Doha Round negotiation areas. These sub-coordinators were normally the more experienced of the trade negotiators from among the Geneva-based representations of ASEAN countries to the WTO, on the topics over which they presided. This weekly process of coordination meetings allowed newly arrived ASEAN trade diplomats to receive technical support from more experienced negotiators, in order to address the significant constraint of having small representations to the WTO. It also fostered systematic exchanges and better mutual understandings of each of ASEAN member's negotiation preferences, thus facilitating unified positions. (TSAI, Charles, 2007)

The results of the ASEAN coordination meetings had at least one important success but also reflected the inadequacies of a purely regional approach to collective representation, particularly when they include economies having differing structures and being at differing levels of development.

## **2. Coordination in Practice:**

Among the ASEAN, the motivation of economizing on the use of the limited number of delegates resident in Geneva and available to work on GATT/WTO activities and negotiating rounds is especially important for the smaller and newer ASEAN members in the WTO. The ASEAN MS believe that on non-binding issues they have achieved a good degree of cooperation/coordination, but that cooperation/coordination on binding issues has been rather modest. This different experience with the two categories of issues is attributed to the more heterogeneous nature of the countries in the group.

Among the successes of ASEAN was the establishment of a strong position within negotiations under the GATS that the development and implementation of an Emergency Safeguard Mechanism (ESM) for services would be a prerequisite for significant new liberalization commitments on trade in services. The ESM would allow WTO Members to take measures to block imports of services in instances of large and unpredictable surges. The ASEAN members had collectively tabled a proposal for the ESM at a very early stage in the Doha Round negotiations, in the face of strong opposition from large developed WTO Members. The complexities involved in negotiating how such a safeguard mechanism would operate in practice have not yet been resolved. Any Doha Round outcome would need to address the ASEAN position for an ESM to accompany any significant liberalizations commitments under trade in services. (TSAI, Charles, 2007)

Solidarity among ASEAN members has allowed for the maintenance of this difficult negotiation position in the face of strong opposition from key developed WTO Members, and has served to enhance the collective interests of the ASEAN members. This position has had positive effects beyond the ASEAN Group, being advantageous for most developing countries.

### **3. Assessment of the Group:**

**The issue of coherence in the negotiations:** It should be acknowledged that ASEAN MS do not have an integrated ASEAN position across the WTO negotiation issues. There are inadequacies within ASEAN as a monolithic negotiation entity that were stated during the Doha Round, due mainly to differing economic structures of its members\*. (TSAI, Charles, 2007).

1. First, among the ten ASEAN countries, Laos and Myanmar are not yet WTO Members and can rely only on ASEAN or the LDC group to address their interests.
2. Cambodia largely aligns itself with the LDCs Group of WTO Members in the current Doha Round of negotiations, adhering to positions that differ from that of other ASEAN members.
3. Malaysia and Thailand are the only ASEAN members to be part of the influential Cairns Group of agricultural exporting countries, which seeks greater liberalizations of trade in agricultural products.
4. Indonesia and the Philippines are the only ASEAN members of the G33 to support special safeguards allowing developing countries to block imports of sensitive agricultural products under specified circumstances (TSAI, Charles, 2007).

Overall cohesion among ASEAN trade diplomats has waned since the early period of the Doha Round. It has been reported that during a specific period of the Doha Round, ASEAN members have met less frequently to coordinate positions. But, they still used to come together, particularly when significant movements occurred in the negotiations.

The ASEAN members have simply become familiar with the areas in which their various national economic interests converge and diverge. Meetings do not seem to be necessary anymore to coordinate positions in the Doha Round negotiations. About a decade ago, the Doha Round negotiations have been marked essentially by stalemate between the well-know positions of various RISCs. It appeared that WTO Members have simply become more sophisticated in selecting between regional and issue specific coalitions in pursuing their national economic interests within the Doha Round of negotiations. The participation of ASEAN members in both the Cairns Group and the G33 suggests that where ASEAN members have not found common positions on specific trade issues, they have found support for their national economic interests in issue specific RISCs.

Scholars highlighted the fact that ASEAN began coordination meetings even before the inception of the Doha Round negotiations. Later, ASEAN negotiators have collectively formulated and implemented effective negotiating positions where the national economic interests of the ASEAN group coincided, and individual ASEAN members have joined other WTO Members in issue specific coalitions where their national economic objectives did not coincide with the ASEAN membership as a whole. By pursuing national trade negotiation objectives, both in regional groupings and in issue specific coalitions (for example, RISCs), the process of multilateral trade negotiations could be considered more legitimate than in the GATT era, when several key developed country RISCs essentially steered multilateral trade negotiations from the Green Room. (TSAI, Charles, 2007)

Figure 8: ASEAN Group Structure



**Factors influencing ASEAN’s decision-making process:** Academic research on some specific areas and countries allows to review the factors influencing ASEAN’s decision making process, and consider some implications for potential further ASEAN’s cooperation. Both positive factors and challenges influencing ASEAN’s cooperation were found (ELDER and MIYAZAWA, 2015). Positive factors include:

- The increasing importance of certain issues;
- The active participation of stakeholders; and
- The experience and capacity of some countries facilitating decision-making.

Challenges include:

- The complex nature of the current framework and insufficient coordination among officials;
- The tendency of WGs to act as forums for policy discussion and review rather than operational entities;
- A persistent shortage of human and financial resources in ASEAN Secretariat; and
- Some domestic factors such as opposition to stronger measures by some stakeholders, procedural and positional differences on particular issues and regional cooperation, and their relatively low priority for member countries.

It also provided a number of recommendations to improve decision-making and implementation of ASEAN cooperation. Some possible ideas, focus areas and issues for cooperation processes are:

- Strengthening ASEC should be a priority given its serious shortage of staff and financial resources. Otherwise, expanding cooperation might be difficult.
- Bilaterally approaching some capable and motivated countries to begin initiatives, and making efforts to gain other countries’ support.
- Focusing on responding to ASEAN’s needs in order to enhance its sense of ownership of cooperation initiatives.
- Focusing on issue-areas and ASEAN countries interested in taking action and leadership. Successful WGs and initiatives are often led by capable and motivated countries among ASEAN MS.
- Involving more stakeholders in both ASEAN’s decision-making and implementation.

- Solving the problem of inadequate availability of appropriate knowledge and information within ASEAN MS, by extending research and utilizing the existing information exchange/ research networks beyond ASEAN. (ELDER and MIYAZAWA, 2015)

### Improving the Cooperation and Coordination Process:

The coordination problem can be realistically addressed. It seems necessary to support improved coordination between the ASEAN Secretariat, focal points of Working Groups, and relevant officials of national governments. Resources should be made available.

**Table 11: Improving the efficiency of ASEAN’s decision-making**

1. Strengthen the ASEAN Secretariat	4. Strengthen data collection and harmonization	7. Promote broader participation of local governments, IOs, business.
2. Enhance communication and coordination among various stakeholders	5. Promote a program-based approach.	8. Cooperation on specific proposed SDGs areas.
3. Strengthen capacity-building for government officials and WGs	6. Strengthen operations of existing ASEAN-affiliated organizations	9. Cooperation on means of implementation for SDGs.

From: ELDER and MIYAZAWA, 2015.

### (D) ACP COUNTRIES GROUP:

The ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States) is an organization created in 1975 by the Georgetown Agreement. Its members are African, Caribbean and Pacific States, (save Cuba, all signatories to the Cotonou Agreement, (also known as the "ACP-EC Partnership Agreement") which binds them to the EU.

There are currently 80 member countries in the ACP Group: 48 are from Sub-Saharan Africa, 16 from the Caribbean and 15 from the Pacific region. 60 of the ACP members are also WTO members, 8 of them are in accession process, while 11 are neither members of the WTO nor observers. Moreover, there are 55 MS Missions in Geneva and 25 non-resident Missions. ACP also has Collaborating Partners based in Geneva; these are the Organization of Eastern and Caribbean States (OECS), Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM) and Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS). The ACP Group is united by common objectives that include the sustainable development of its MS. International trade plays an important role to achieve this objective. ACP aims to strengthen international trade to achieve further integration into the global economy. The ACP Group’s main objectives are:

- Sustainable development and gradual integration into the global economy, by reducing poverty and establishing a fairer and more equitable world order, are a priority;
- Coordinating the activities of the ACP Group in the framework of the implementation of ACP-EC Partnership Agreements remains a permanent objective;
- Consolidating unity and solidarity among ACP States, as well as understanding among their peoples; and
- Establishing and consolidating peace and stability in free and democratic societies.

#### 1. Institutional Setting of the Group:

The ACP Group is characterized by the following structure.

**The ACP Secretariat:** The Secretariat is responsible for the administrative management of the ACP Group. It assists the Group's decision-making and advisory organs in carrying out

their work. The ACP Secretariat's headquarters is located in Brussels. It is headed by an Executive Secretary-General who is responsible for implementing the Group's international policy, as well as directing and coordinating its cooperation policy. The Secretariat, under the direction of the ACP Group's policy-making organs (Summit of ACP Heads of State and Government, Council of Ministers, Committee of Ambassadors), is responsible for:

- carrying out the tasks assigned to it by the Summit of ACP Heads of State and Government, Council of Ministers, Committee of Ambassadors and the ACP Parliamentary Assembly;
- contributing to the implementation of the decisions taken by these organs;
- monitoring the implementation of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement;
- assisting the ACP organs and joint institutions created as the framework of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreements.
- Acting on proposals from the Committee of Ambassadors, the Council of Ministers determines the structure of the ACP Secretariat and lays down its Staff Regulations.

**The Secretary-General:** The Secretary General is responsible for recruiting the staff for the ACP Secretariat, based exclusively on the competence of the candidates. Nevertheless, the Secretary General ensures, as much as possible, that a balance is maintained among the different ACP regions, as reflected in the recruitment statistics.

The Council of Ministers determines the ACP Secretariat's financial regulations and approves its budget. Each ACP State contributes to financing the budget in conformity with the provisions laid down by the Council of Ministers.

**Roles and Duties:** The Council of Ministers appoints the Secretary General as the principal authority at the ACP Secretariat, on the basis of merit, competence and integrity. He is appointed for a five-year term and is the Secretariat's designated representative and is responsible for:

- Ensuring the quality of the technical and administrative support and services provided by the Secretariat to the members and organs of the ACP Group;
- Managing staff, projects and programs; and
- Implementing the Group's international policy, as well as directing and coordinating its cooperation policy.

**The ACP Geneva Office:** This organ was established initially in December 2001 as a project funded by the EU to assist the ACP Group in its negotiations with the WTO relating to trade matters. Later, it has acquired a more permanent status and has widened its mandate. The mandate of the ACP Geneva Office consists of the following:

- Representing the SG of ACP Group at meetings organized by the Geneva-based UNO, WTO and other institutions.
- Facilitating coordination among the Representatives of ACP countries in Geneva and, through the Secretariat;
- Acting as an intermediary between their ACP counterparts in Brussels;
- Providing technical assistance to ACP States with regard to issues dealt with in Geneva, particularly those relating to Doha negotiations under WTO; and
- Performing duties relating to Administration and Finances in connection with the functions of the ACP Geneva Office.

**The Council of Ministers:** It is the Group's main and supreme decision-making body responsible for implementing the guidelines laid down by the Summit. Ministerial sectoral meetings are held regularly: Meeting of Trade Ministers, Meeting of Ministers of Culture.

- The Council is composed of a member of Government from each ACP State or a government-designated representative.
- It outlines the terms and conditions for implementing the Group's objectives as set out in its general policy. It periodically checks to see whether these objectives have been attained.
- The Council meets twice annually in ordinary sessions. It may also meet, when necessary, in a special session on the advice of the President, after consultation with all the members of the Bureau.

**The Council Presidency:** The Council of Ministers elects its Bureau - headed by a President - at the end of each of its ordinary sessions. A system of rotation has been established to ensure that representatives from the six ACP regions have the opportunity to preside over the Council. The Bureau is composed of nine members:

- Six regional representatives (one per region);
- A President;
- The outgoing and incoming Presidents as full members.

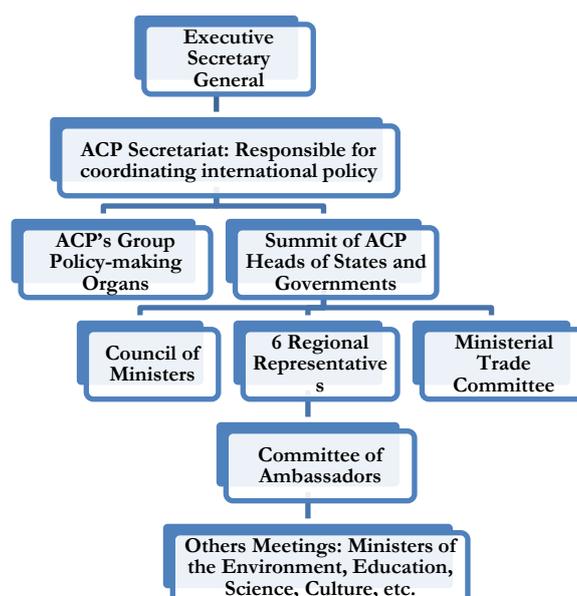
The acts of the Council of Ministers may take the form of decisions, resolutions or recommendations.

**Rules of Procedure of the Council of Ministers / Other ACP Ministerial Meetings:** The Council of Ministers convenes meetings of Ministers responsible for different areas included among the Group's objectives.

**Ministerial Trade Committee (MTC):** The Ministerial Trade Committee is a task force of Trade Ministers (a total of 18, three per region) responsible for conducting, coordinating and monitoring certain trade negotiations.

**Meeting of National and Regional Authorizing Officers:** These meetings are attended mainly by Ministers in charge of cooperation with the EU.

Figure 9: ACP Group Structure



## 2. Coordination in practice:

The ACP countries are participating in two parallel rounds of negotiations which are of crucial importance for their trade and agricultural policies. Most of them, as MS of the WTO,

have been participating in the renegotiation since 2000 of the agricultural agreement, implemented in 1995. The renegotiation was scheduled to be completed by the end of 2005, on the occasion of the 6th WTO MC in Hong Kong.

The issues of the multilateral agricultural negotiations involve in particular the three pillars of the agricultural agreement: improving market access by reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers; the disciplines concerning the use of domestic supports so that aid granted to farmers does not distort markets; and the disciplines relative to export supports such as export subsidies and other measures having equivalent effects. Moreover, the ACP countries have been negotiating since September 2002 with the EU to put in place an EPA starting on 1st January 2008. The trade regime under Lomé between the ACP countries and the EU was based on non-reciprocal trade preferences; the EU granted preferential access to exports from the ACP countries in comparison to other countries, while the ACP countries were not obliged in exchange to grant the same preferential access to the EU in comparison to their other partners.

The EPA and WTO negotiations are crucially important for the agriculture of the ACP countries since they provide major changes in their environment. The preparation of the ACP countries is therefore also crucial and it is important for the ACP countries to take the initiative in proposing negotiating positions so that their interests are better defended and taken into consideration. The ACP countries had to pay particular attention to this linkage between the two negotiations if they want to defend fully their agricultural interests, taking care not to reduce their room for manoeuvre in one round of negotiations on account of positions adopted in the other negotiating forum. (ALPHA, Arlène, FAUCHEUX, Benoît, HERMELIN, Bénédicte and FAUTREL, Vincent, 2005).

**A few facts:** By the end of July 2015, the delegation of Barbados on behalf of the ACP Group, submitted at proposals to bridge the gap on the remaining Doha Development Agenda (DDA) issues for the delivery of a development package in Nairobi (ICTSD Bridges 2015).

The Group urged Ministers at MC10 to agree on a development package which, at minimum, contained the following decisions: agriculture, NAMA, services, as well as emphasis on the development component of the DDA, including an agreement on the LDC issues and a final solution for cotton.

The submission followed from the informal Heads of Delegations' meeting which took place on 8 July 2015, where WTO DG invited the MS to submit contributions that would assist in achieving convergence in key areas. The ACP group's communication also reiterated the importance of maintaining special flexibilities to LDCs and SVEs, considered as "critical to ensuring the greater participation and fuller integration of such economies into the MTS". "The ACP Group holds the view that an emerging consensus in key negotiating areas ahead of MC10 will be critical to meaningful outcomes at Nairobi." The ACP Group followed this call by building upon its prior submission on elements for a post-Bali work program. (BRIDGES AFRICA, 23 March 2015). The ACP Group outlines a minimum number of decisions that Ministers should agree upon. These include:

- An agreement to maintain the flexibilities in both the 2008 text on agriculture and NAMA, keeping in mind the specific circumstances of developing countries, LDCs and SVEs;
- The reaffirmation of the flexibilities for developing countries, LDCs and SVEs contained in GATS;

- An agreement on the SDT proposals, on the developmental and food security aspects of fisheries' subsidies including those minimum disciplines that can more easily gain consensus, on the LDC issues at Nairobi - including rules of origin, Duty Free Quota Free (DFQF), the operationalization of the services waiver, on a final solution for cotton as well as on the establishment of a working group to examine and address all NTBs that affect export trade of developing countries, in particular, LDCs and SVEs. (Nairobi, ICSTD, Bridges, 21 August 2015)

### 3. Assessment of the Group:

**Strengths and successes of the ACP Group:** The Group's major strength is its exceptionalism in providing a tri-continental outreach and an avenue for participation and impact on global governance in key areas. An ACP culture has evolved over many years. It is made of political and diplomatic consensus building processes and contributes in keeping the Group as a global actor and an effective interlocutor for its MS.

The ACP's close historic and structured relationship with Europe, its rapprochement with emerging economies and its traditional position within the G77 and China place it in an enviable position to respond to emerging challenges and to play an important and bigger role in global economic and political governance. The Group has demonstrated its ability and strength in various instances to provide its members with a platform for elaboration of common positions in otherwise complicated multilateral processes, most notably at the WTO. Furthermore, the Group has succeeded in negotiating in a context characterized by stark asymmetry; it has provided a unique constituency for its MS to engage with bilateral and multilateral partners in its pursuit of sustainable development, inclusive growth and poverty elimination.

**Weaknesses:** Some of the limitations of the Group reflect its lack of capacity to respond to policy changes in both the EU and the global environment. The ACP has been slow to adapt to both changing paradigms and emerging opportunities. The diversity of the Group offers opportunities but, if not well managed and harnessed, could be a potential source of weakness given that the group is composed of both large economies (e.g. Nigeria, South Africa) which still have pressing issues of domestic poverty and inclusiveness; and small island States, land-locked countries and LDCs which face similar but even deeper-rooted challenges. Another serious weakness is the failure by most MS to make timely, regular and sustained contributions to the ACP budget, thereby affecting the implementation of agreed work plans.

The ACP Group's success is more visible at the multilateral trade arena. The setting up of the ACP Group Office in Geneva and subsequent structuring to act in unison enhance and continue to strengthen the spirit of independence and solidarity within the Group. The ACP Group's representation at the WTO in Geneva points the way for other cohesive and practical activities that could be pursued in other areas beyond trade.

Perhaps due to financial and human resource constraints, the ACP Group does not appear to have replicated this successful experience into other areas of work in Geneva. There is a strong consensus and conviction among ACP stakeholders that the Group should remain as a collective entity despite its mixed record of successes in certain aspects, failures and missed opportunities in others (REPORT by the Eminent Persons Group, March 2016).

## CHAPTER III

### THE WAY FORWARD: PROPOSALS FOR THE INCREASING OF OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES COORDINATION LEVELS WITHIN THE WTO

**On participation and coordination at the WTO:** There are several dimensions to participation of any Group in the WTO process:

- Active involvement in designing the rules of multilateral trade-related interactions constitute one of the dimensions of participation.
- Another critically important dimension relates to the give-and-take involved in the process of multilateral trade negotiations.

Effective participation in the WTO process can generate several beneficial outcomes:

- The first and perhaps most obvious is the gain in market access.
- The second is that reciprocally bargained multilateral agreements help maintain a more rational trade regime. (BLACKHURST, R., LYAKURWA, B. and OYEJIDE, A.)

The objectives of coordination can be summarized as follows:

- Sharing information;
- Serving as a political umbrella / shield, against anti-OIC decisions and to protect OIC interests;
- Helping acceding OIC MS to become WTO members;
- Allowing to identify interest/priority issues;
- Coordinating to further negotiate OIC's Observer Status;
- Improving understand and act in WTO systemic issues: DSS, DM Process, and future issues in general.

This third chapter is divided into three sections:

- The first is dedicated to the early recommendations relating to the specific issue of coordination among OIC MS at the WTO; these recommendations were elaborated by the specialized organs of the OIC as early as 1997.
- The second deals with the present recommendations of the OIC MS, as expressed through a survey undertaken by ICDT at the OIC Geneva Office (OIC MS Geneva-based Diplomatic Representations).
- The third exposes the possible practical options offered to OIC MS to respond to the coordination challenge at the WTO.

#### SECTION I: RECOMMENDATIONS OF OIC GENERAL SECRETARIAT IN 1997

These recommendations have to be replaced back in their historical context. The Report of the thirteenth meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC (Ankara, 10-12 May 1997) "underlined the importance of the initiative to establish a mechanism for consultation among member countries during the WTO meetings". It also pointed out that the globalization, which encompassed varying degrees of increasing integration of world markets of goods, services, capital, technology and labor, presented opportunities and challenges for the development process".

The Report also stated that "interdependence among countries had already led to the emergence and strengthening of regional groupings", and expressed "the importance the

cooperation activities within the Islamic world”, stressing the important role of OIC in this connection. The representative of COMCEC Coordination Office presented a "Working Paper on the Formation of Regional Groups within OIC for a More Effective Economic Cooperation among the OIC Member Countries".

From that date on, the WTO issue was considered as permanent item of the agenda of the COMCEC and its Follow-up Committee.

- “The OIC General Secretariat and the OIC concerned institutions, namely, ICDT, ICCI, SESRTCIC, IDB may monitor the WTO activities of importance and interest to the Member States, and report on their activities in their respective fields of competence to the COMCEC through the Follow-up Committee”.
- “A meeting of OIC Member States shall be convened during the WTO Meetings to facilitate the process of consultation amongst themselves and facilitate coordination of positions. The OIC General Secretariat shall take the initiative to arrange these meetings”.
- The Islamic Development Bank offered its efforts to assist the OIC Member Countries in their endeavors to become active members of WTO.
- The Committee appreciated the initiative taken by IDB to organize consultations among Member States during the WTO Ministerial Meeting held in Singapore in December 1996.
- The Committee took note with appreciation that IDB would organize a seminar for member countries to discuss their problems in regard to their accession to WTO, in Jeddah from 7 to 10 June 1997, and urged member countries to actively participate in the seminar.

In the area of trade, and because of the necessity of a new approach to cooperation among member countries for the implementation of Uruguay Round Agreements, the Report strongly underlined “the importance of the initiative to create a mechanism for consultation among member countries during the WTO meetings”.

Since the 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC (Ankara, 10-12 May 1997), COMCEC Coordination Office and IDB proposed a mechanism to facilitate consultations among MS in pursuit of common stand at future WTO Meetings. The OIC GS has taken the initiative of holding a joint meeting of the representatives of the General Secretariat, COMCEC Coordination Office and the IDB in Ankara on May 8-9, 1997 in order to work out the outline of the mechanism for consultation mentioned above. Some important parameters and relevant factors were taken into consideration:

- Timing of holding consultations;
- Selection of issues for deliberation and consultations: identifying areas of common interest;
- Determining appropriate venue of the consultations: by virtue of its proximity to the hub of WTO activities;
- Assigning coordinating role for organizing consultation meetings: collection of latest information on the relevant issues, undertaking analysis and preparing documents, etc.;
- Determining a consultation process, without creating a new institution;
- Outline of the proposed Mechanism of Consultation: to involve all concerned organs and institutions of the OIC System.

**Table 12: Main Recommendations of OIC General Secretariat**

Step 1: Keeping tab on relevant developments	Step 2: Determining right timing of meetings	Step 3: Undertaking necessary works for holding meetings	Step 4: Effecting follow-up actions
<p>GS, COMCEC Coordination office, OIC Mission in Geneva, IDB, SESRTCIC, ICDT and ICCI (the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry) to prepare periodic monitoring reports, on important WTO matters of interest, where consultations by MS are needed, in order to help them in their preparation for Consultation Meetings at appropriate time.</p>	<p>Keeping the timing of proposed Consultation Meetings flexible, through regular consultations with concerned OIC institutions. Attempts to be made by GS to propose best possible time for Consultation Meetings, the views of the Permanent Representatives of the MS in Geneva can also be ascertained through the OIC Office in Geneva. OIC GS will then notify all concerned about the date. As regards the venue, Permanent Representatives in Geneva and to the WTO, OIC Observer Mission in Geneva and GS think Geneva to be cost-effective and most suitable venue for Consultation Meetings.</p>	<p>OIC Mission in Geneva to be utilised to undertake the necessary spadework for organising the meeting under the guidance of the GS. UN or Permanent Mission of any MS to provide meeting room. Working papers to be prepared OIC GS and concerned institutions and sent to MS in time.</p>	<p>As follow-up, report of Meetings to be presented to COMCEC for endorsement. Recommendations and conclusions to be transmitted to all MS to have them reflected, as far as possible, and in meetings of other relevant multilateral bodies or organisations (G-77).</p>

(Source: OIC/COMCEC-FC/13-97/REP Report of the thirteenth meeting of the follow-up committee of the COMCEC, Ankara, 10-12 May 1997).

## SECTION II: SYNTHESIS OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF OIC MEMBER STATES

In order to uncover the positions of OIC MS relating to the coordination issue, an empirical study was conducted under the form of a questionnaire, available in the three languages: English, Arabic and French (See the English version in Annex 4). In this regard, ICDT approached the Permanent delegation of the OIC to United Nations in Geneva (on 20th March 2018) to circulate the questionnaire and also to host a workshop for considering the draft study to be prepared by ICDT and IDB consultant and team. The Permanent delegation of the OIC in Geneva has sent a Verbal Note to OIC missions to WTO based in Geneva on 26<sup>th</sup> March and a reminder note on May 18<sup>th</sup> and June 13<sup>th</sup> to all OIC missions to WTO requesting them, once again, to complete the questionnaires.

Also, personalized messages were sent to the OIC missions to WTO notably to: Egypt, Morocco, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Maldives, Oman, Pakistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei, Indonesia, Jordan, Kuwait, UAE and Nigeria. In the Verbal Note, it was mentioned that ICDT would study the completed questionnaires and would share the findings and recommendations with the Permanent Missions of the OIC MS (1<sup>st</sup> week of September or 3<sup>rd</sup> week of October 2018) in Geneva. Up to the middle of August 2018 and out of the 42 OIC delegations with at least one official resident in Geneva, about eleven completed and returned (a low return date of 23%). The questionnaire is divided into four sections; each section corresponds to a level of information needed to address the issue of coordination: (For the detailed questions, see Annex 4)

**Table 13: Structure of the questionnaire**

<b>Section/Level 1</b> Importance and knowledge on the MTS and its implications of OIC MS	<b>Section/Level 2</b> Coordination at the National, Regional and Multilateral Levels
<b>Section/Level 3</b> OIC institutions and MS capacity to identify and implement pro-development reforms and appropriate policies to benefit from the MTS	<b>Section/Level 4</b> Improved Communication and flow of information exchange between OIC MS, OIC Geneva based representatives and OIC institutions and General Secretariat

Some of the questions allowed for quantitative responses, while others allowed for more qualitative ones. The analysis of the completed questionnaires leads us to the following major findings:

**Level 1: Importance and knowledge on the MTS and implications of OIC Member States**

- Officers working on the WTO issues: The average number of officers working on WTO issues in OIC MS is around 6 officers in each country. The respondents did not specify if all of them are related to the Ministries of Trade or to other departments. For some MS, the data were unavailable.
- Ministry of origin: In 7 cases, most of these officers are affiliated to the Ministries of Trade. While in the remaining cases (4), they belong to other Ministries. For one case, the data were missing.
- Other IOs and/or UN Agencies covered by officers: The Geneva-based officers cover, by order of importance:

<b>UNCTAD</b>	<b>ITC</b>	<b>WIPO</b>	<b>ACP, COMCEC, EU, UNO</b>	<b>WTO, WTO Law, OIC, ECOWAS, ECA, ITU, ILO, WHO, UNIDO, UNECE</b>
(8)	(5)	(3)	(2)	(1)

- Level of qualifications, skills or expertise: The levels of qualification and skills of officers were classified in 3 categories: high, medium and basic.

<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>No prior qualification</b>
2 MS	1 MS	3 MS	4 MS*

\*: officers seem to have been nominated according to other criteria.

- Advantages/Benefits taken from various capacity-building projects/initiatives offered by the OIC institutions (IDB, ICDT): In 2 cases, officers have highly benefited from capacity-building programs. In 3 cases, officers have benefited from similar programs on an average basis. In 4 cases, officers were offered a basic training. While in 2 remaining cases, data were lacking.
- Advantages/Benefits taken from WTO Awareness Programs: 4 MS officers have highly taken advantage from WTO Awareness Programs, 4 others have benefited on an average basis, and one on a basic level. For one case, there has been no benefit taken and for another one, data were unavailable.

**Level 2: Coordination at the National, Regional and Multilateral Levels**

- Institutions involved in Trade Policy Formulation and Implementation: In general, the institutions involved in trade policy are, by order of importance: the Ministry of Trade (and technical departments) (in 8 MS), the Ministry of Industry (2), the Ministry of Agriculture (1), the Ministry of Economy (1), the Ministry of Finance (1), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1). (The distinctions between the different Ministries is

conform to the responses of the MS Delegations). Moreover, in some cases, the private sector and NGOs are also associated. For one case, there were no data.

- National coordination framework: In almost all cases (except for 2 where data were unavailable), there exist different national institutions that serve as national coordination frameworks: national committees, institutions, working groups, etc.
- Membership in current WTO coordination groups: 8 MS are members of WTO coordination groups: AG, ACP, G90, G90+China, G33, C4, LDCs, W52, Arab G, etc. Data were unavailable for 3 MS. (For more detailed information on membership in WTO Coordination Groups, see Chapter I).
- OIC MS Ambassadors meetings on WTO issues: For 4 MS, data were unavailable. For 3 MS, no Ambassadors' meetings were reported. Only 4 MS declared there were meetings at Ambassadors' level, mainly prior to WTO MCs.
- Suggested practical options to improve OIC coordination: This question is of great importance. The data collected seem to correspond fairly to the recommendations and options presented in this Chapter (See Section III). These can be presented as follows:

Member States	2 MS	3 MS	2MS	4 MS
Suggestions	Creation of an OIC Group at the WTO	Enhancing of OIC Geneva Office Role	Creation of ad hoc mechanisms	No data available

- Ambassadors to the WTO participation to the COMCEC Trade Ministers' meetings: As for their role in these meetings, the collected data can be organized according to the degree of involvement (from strong to weak), as follows:

Member States	Degree 1: 6 MS	Degree 2: 1 MS	Degree 3: 1 MS	3 MS
Suggested role	Involvement. More negotiations on coordination. Exchange of information. Participation of consultants and experts. Follow up.	Examining of priorities	Participation	No available data

### **Level 3: OIC institutions and Member States' capacity to identify and implement pro-development reforms and appropriate policies to benefit from the MTS.**

- Priorities and critical issues in WTO negotiations: Data were available for all respondents, except for one. The findings point out to the following priorities as identified by MS. They are classified by recurrence (order of importance).

(Sustainable) Development	6
Agriculture, Technical Assistance, Market Access	4
TRIPS, Trade Facilitation, SPS, Cotton,	3
OTC, Doha Package	2
Capacity-building, Food Safety, Competition, Geographical indicators, Tropical Products, Bananas, E-Commerce, Public Markets, NTB, Acceding Conditions, MTS, NAMA, Public Health, Aid for Trade	1

- Common positions on WTO issues and areas of focus: As for the areas where common positions can be stated, the collected data allowed for the uncovering of the following:

Aid for Trade	OIC Issues	Coordination issues	WTO MC Agendas	MS Positions	Agriculture	SDT
4	3	2	2	1	1	1

- Existing opportunities for OIC to improve the supply side constraints: These were organized on three levels: political/systemic, economic and technical.

Political/Systemic Level	Economic Level	Technical Level
1. Intensive communication and consultations on intra-OIC issues. Intra-OIC cooperation. Intra-OIC TPS. 2. Taking into account political considerations and going beyond the Doha Round Objectives. 3. Increasing of national capacities.	1. Social and economic development. 2. Trade, investment, E-Commerce and digital economy.	Support of AATB and AFTIAS

- OIC addressing constraints to improve the supply side constraints: The respondents identified certain constraints that have to be addressed to improve. These can be classified in the following categories:

Categories	Political	Economic	Technical	Hybrid categories	
				Pol/Econo	Pol/Econo/Tech
	Harmonize implementation of measures	Enhance production capacity	More studies on trade opportunities	Benefit from MTS	More direct consultations
	Stay away from political disputes	Benefit from intra-OIC trade	Technical assistance	OIC to support Aid for Trade	
	Promote accession to WTO (ICDT and IDB)	Enhance trade facilitation		OIC to support capacity-building	
	Share information			More projects on sustainable development	
	Support existing mechanisms				

**Level 4: Improved Communication and flow of information exchange between OIC Member States, OIC Geneva-based representatives and OIC institutions and General Secretariat.**

- Ways/Means to improve OIC Geneva-based coordination machinery: Data were not available for 3 MS. All other respondents agree on the necessity to improve the OIC Geneva machinery; they suggest: a general support for the OIC Geneva Office, meetings to increase information flow and communication, and meetings for coordination according to needs. The periodicity varies: the meetings should take place once every 6/3 months and even once/twice a month.
- Usefulness of Focal Points: Data were not available for 2 MS, and one MS did not really see the usefulness of having Focal Points, proposing instead better communication and intensive meetings. All the other MS agree on the importance of Focal Points:
  - either on a case by case basis,
  - within a rotating system,
  - for the sharing and dissemination of information among MS Delegations,
  - to discuss coordination issues,
  - to facilitate working on ad hoc issues.

Focal Points should be well trained.

1	2	3
On a case by case basis; For ad hoc issues	Within a rotating system	To share and disseminate information among MS Delegations; To discuss coordination issues.

- Chairmanship of WTO Committees or trade negotiating groups: Most MS have not chaired WTO Coordinating Groups, except for one MS (Committee on Trade Investment Measures). One MS claims that this is due mainly to a shortage in human resources. (For more detailed data on this question, see Chapter I)
- Consequential enhancement of capacity in WTO processes and procedures: This questions concerns the MS taken individually. 9 MS affirmed that improved communication and flow of information would increase the capacities of OIC MS. The aim is to better serve the topics covered (1 MS), and the capacity to negotiate (1 MS). One MS expressed its concern on the need to have independent structures in Geneva. Another MS stressed the necessity of direct contact between relevant institutions and the Ministries. Data were unavailable for 2 MS.
- Enhancement of OIC influence in WTO processes and procedures: This question deals with the OIC as a collective system of action. Data were unavailable for 2 MS. All other MS see that improved communication and flow of information exchange between OIC MS, OIC Geneva based representatives and OIC institutions and General Secretariat would provide political and technical assistance and allow to defend MS positions. This would improve the capacity of OIC to be involved in WTO matters and have more influence on WTO processes. The main constraint raised by one MS is the fact that OIC does not have an Observer Status yet. Still, MS can individually defend their positions.
- Enhancement of OIC MS responses on priority issues at the WTO: Among 11 respondents, 9 MS think that this would necessarily enhance OIC responses on priority issues, through the quality of reports and briefings.
- Actions to grant OIC Observer Status: The information collected on this extremely important question can be synthesized in four steps, as follows:

Steps	1	2	3	4
<b>Actions to be undertaken</b>	More efficient consultations for intra-OIC coordination and unified positions	Associating of consultants and experts in this process	Advocating with other Groups	Being closer to WTO (Secretariat) and lobbying

### General observations on the findings:

The data collected through the questionnaire from 11 MS Geneva-based Delegations (out of 48 MS represented) are not enough to allow broad generalizations or to capture the complexity of coordination issues. For example, there are no data regarding horizontal bargaining processes and vertical power relations between principals and agents. Depending on the available data, some of the questions that a study on coordination could try to answer are: the subdivision of overall activities into goals; the allocation of resources among these activities; the assigning of activities to groups or individual actors; the sharing of information among different actors to help achieve the overall goals. These findings can

also be usefully organized, analyzed and interpreted according to the Malone, T.W., and K. Crowston (1991) model presented in the Introduction:

**Table 14: Synthesis of the Findings**

Components of coordination	Associated coordination processes: coordination means “the act of working together”.
<b>Goals</b>	<p><b>Identifying goals: activities directed towards some goals:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Activities seem to be directed towards the issues related to (sustainable) development, and trade.</li> <li>▪ Moreover, sectors such as agriculture, technical assistance, market access, TRIPS, Trade facilitation, SPS, cotton, etc. are also important.</li> <li>▪ Increasing national capacities.</li> <li>▪ Support of existing (coordination) mechanisms.</li> <li>▪ Awareness of need to go beyond the Doha Round objectives.</li> </ul>
<b>Activities</b>	<p><b>Mapping goals to activities (goal decomposition): one or more actors performing some activities. Activities are not independent.</b></p> <p>By order of importance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Capacity-building projects/initiatives.</li> <li>▪ Awareness of advantages/benefits to be taken from WTO programs.</li> <li>▪ Awareness of more efficient consultations for unified positions, through more sharing of information, better flow of communication, frequent OIC MS Ambassadors’ meetings.</li> </ul>
<b>Actors</b>	<p><b>Mapping activities to actors (task assignment): activities carried out by actors in a way to help achieve the goals.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Institutions involved: Ministries of Trade, Industry, Agriculture, Economy, Finance, Foreign Affairs.</li> <li>▪ In some MS, associating of NGOs.</li> <li>▪ Creation of national coordination frameworks or similar institutions.</li> <li>▪ Membership in some of the WTO coordination groups.</li> </ul>
<b>Interdependencies</b>	<p><b>‘Managing’ interdependencies (resource allocation, sequencing, and synchronizing): reaching of efficient coordination based on compromise/consensus with regard to all four above-mentioned dimensions. Coordination resulting in more or less elaborate agreements.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In general, OIC (as an IO) not enough involved in WTO issues.</li> <li>▪ Some MS trying to reach common positions on issues, such as: Aid for Trade, OIC coordination problems, MC Agendas, etc.</li> <li>▪ Political and systemic interdependencies: lack of intensive communication and consultations on intra-OIC issues.</li> <li>▪ Suggestions to start on a case by case basis (ad hoc issues).</li> </ul>

### SECTION III: MAIN POLICY OPTIONS

According to the analysis of the (relatively few) collected data from OIC MS Representations at the Geneva Office, it is possible to imagine three main policy options options to develop coordination among OIC MS at the WTO, ranging from the most radical to the most conservative:

**Table 15: Options to increase Coordination among OIC MS at the WTO**

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Creating an OIC Group at the WTO	Reforming the current structures and practices	Keeping a quasi-status-quo

It is possible in a further step to establish a roadmap and to decide what to do and how to do it. Let us first look at these options.

## **A/ OPTION 1: CREATION OF AN OIC GROUP WITHIN THE WTO**

The first option and the most radical one (because it is requiring a systemic transformation) would be to create an OIC Group within the WTO that will resemble to the African Group in its structure and mechanisms and be adapted to the specificities of the OIC MS. Our hypothesis is that this strongest option stems from the resolutions of 13<sup>th</sup> Follow-Up Committee of the COMCEC in 1997, two years after the beginning of the WTO. It is needless to say that the present state of the coordination process is very insufficient. How can OIC MS solve this problem?

### **A few facts on the OIC Group:**

- OIC is not an economic grouping in the first place; rather, it is historically a political entity and presently more economic and technical cooperation and humanities oriented.
- OIC MS are also willing to do business, like all countries in the world.
- OIC is a non-official and non-recognized group at WTO.
- OIC is not even a permanent Observer member; OIC and its Institutions are invited on a case by case basis.
- OIC is a very large IO (the second largest in the world); the number of OIC MS is huge, and the whole “group” does not meet in Geneva.

### **A few observations on the OIC Group at UN in Geneva:**

- Within this “Group”, there are coordinators. Iran was the former coordinator, without being a WTO MS. The current coordinator is Bangladesh.
- The actions of OIC MS at the WTO tend to be very pragmatic (i.e. the cotton issue).
- Within OIC, African and Asian MS are active in other Groups.

### **Therefore, this potential OIC MS Group needs to be reactivated:**

- The first step would be to reactivate the OIC Geneva Office. OIC needs to have an Observer Status, to be able to attract the attention of WTO and other Groups to its particular demands/specificities. For instance, ACP OIC MS are very active within this Group.
- This should be achieved gradually, advocating the added-value that could be brought to MS, and convince them to form and start acting as a “Group”.

OIC MS could possibly create a Group, without OIC being a WTO Observer Member. It would be more useful to have both: to be a WTO Member and to form a Group. But, it seems that this step of convincing OIC MS to form a Group within the WTO also needs coordination and a marketing plan. Many questions may arise here for the MS:

- Are current WTO OIC MS interested to be part of this new Group?
- What would be the added-value for them?
- What are their common interests? Are these related to specific sectors, services or products to be negotiated in common?
- Is there an interest for WTO to allow the creation of new Groups?

As a comparison, the following international/intergovernmental organizations have an “ad hoc Observer Status” on a meeting-by-meeting basis:

**Table 16: IO/IGO having an “ad hoc Observer Status”:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ African Union (AU)</li> <li>▪ Arab Maghreb Union (AMU)</li> <li>▪ Common Fund for Commodities (CFC)</li> <li>▪ Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)</li> <li>▪ Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)</li> <li>▪ Inter-Arab Investment Guarantee Cooperation (IAIGC)</li> <li>▪ International Coffee Organization (ICO)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Islamic Development Bank (IDB)</li> <li>▪ Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC)</li> <li>▪ Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)</li> <li>▪ South Centre (SC)</li> <li>▪ United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)</li> <li>▪ West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)</li> <li>▪ World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)</li> </ul>
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Therefore, the problem is how to do to become accepted as a Group in WTO. As a starting point, OIC should seek to be recognized as an Observer Member at the WTO, to have a seat in the organization. Later, OIC could ask to be recognized as a Group in WTO. Some recommendations could help in establishing this practical option.

### **Steps towards forming a WTO OIC Group**

For WTO OIC MS, it is necessary to establish an informal OIC Group to coordinate their positions in the WTO and provide a forum to exchange views on how to best improve OIC's participation in the MTS. The establishment of the Group should be motivated by the objectives of coordinating and mobilizing the potential coalitional strength of the nominally largest regional group and compensating for capacity deficit, lack of expertise and other weaknesses.

It is worth remembering that there are no formal procedures as to how a group of countries is to be recognized as such at the WTO. Groups may form and disappear informally. The only “formally recognized” categories of MS are those of “Developed countries”, “Developing Countries” and “Lest Developed Countries”.

**Capacity-building:** It must be aimed at the various parties concerned by the WTO negotiations. This involves developing human resources and the expertise of the OIC negotiators, representatives of civil society, including producer organizations, and the private sector. These parties must be able to define their own negotiating positions in agreement with their objectives and development priorities, and then be able to defend them. This implies a clear economic development strategy at both national and regional levels, if necessary through an institutional reinforcement.

**Technical assistance:** It is essential to be fully aware of the standards and to be able to respect them and have the ability to ensure that they are being fully respected.

**Support in negotiations:** It should take the form of:

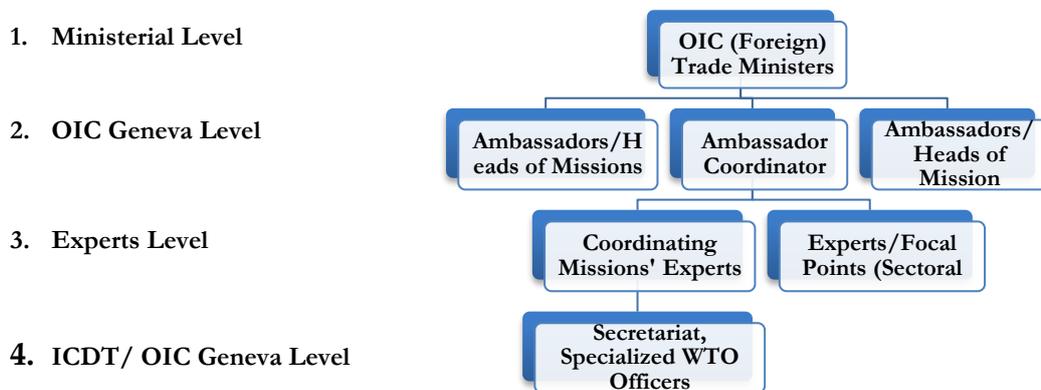
- Undertaking impact studies on the various options under consideration in the WTO and EPAs negotiations (impact of different degrees of reciprocity, the erosion of trade preferences linked to reforms of the product protocols, greater flexibility in the rules of origin, the competitive effects of an increase in imports and, moreover, in order to define the special products excluded from the EPAs, etc.).
- Organizing information/training sessions and consultations between the various parties concerned.

### **The added-value of an OIC Group at the WTO:**

What could be the added value of an OIC Group?

First, an OIC Group could produce new ideas about the future of the WTO, which is presently a critical issue (On “trade war” and the WTO crisis, see Bibliography). OIC MS have very important resources and thus could identify new issues or solutions. This depends, of course, on the political imagination and skills of the decision-makers.

Figure 10: Proposed Structure for an OIC Group at the WTO



#### B/ OPTION 2: REFORM OF THE CURRENT PRACTICE:

This second option implies, at least, the following steps:

- Establishing an independent agenda item, dedicated to WTO issues at the COMCEC meetings.
- Holding consultative meetings at the level of senior officials based in Geneva and/or in Casablanca and Jeddah alternatively, to discuss priority issues. IDB in particular has been following this practice and holding such meetings since the first WTO MC.
- Organizing a Consultative Ministerial Meeting on WTO issues (on the side-lines of COMCEC Ministerial Meetings) before the WTO MC.
- Empowering ICDT and OIC Geneva Office: a WTO Unit could be created at the Geneva Office in cooperation with ICDT and IDB, giving a more dynamic role to OIC Geneva Office in the WTO issues.

Here again, in order to reform the current practice, developing capacity-building that addresses both the trade negotiating capacity and implementation aspects is indispensable. Developing trade related technical assistance and capacity-building is vital for OIC countries to increase effective participation in the MTS and to increase OIC’s trade related supply capacity. OIC MS capacity-building should be re-examined and enhanced through the following means:

#### At the COMCEC level:

- An independent and permanent agenda item should be established, dedicated to WTO issues.
- Organizing Ministerial Meetings on a yearly basis on the margin of COMCEC meetings.
- Holding senior official coordination meetings of OIC MS within the WTO twice a year in Geneva by OIC Geneva Office, IDB and ICDT.

**At the OIC Geneva Office level:**

- In order to give a more dynamic role to OIC Geneva Office, by involving this diplomatic representation in the WTO issues and increasing its capacities,

**Mainstreaming trade at the institutional level** is equally important. OIC countries need to ensure that trade is coordinated within the different governments' ministries, mainly the Ministry of Trade and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as Finance and Economic Planning Ministries. It is imperative that OIC countries put in place strong domestic institutional frameworks for trade policy formulation, analysis and implementation. Moreover, OIC officials need to have appropriate skills and knowledge of the issues being negotiated. In this regard, OIC MS need to take full advantage of the various technical assistance activities offered by the WTO, OIC and other development partners.

**Encouraging the creation of an OIC informal group within the WTO by OIC MS Delegations in Geneva:** In the present situation of the WTO, any efforts of consultation among OIC MS could be an added-value to the WTO.

**C/ OPTION 3: KEEPING THE PRESENT PRACTICE "AS IS": QUASI-STATU-QUO/SHALLOW REFORMS.**

This last option is the most conservative. We may call it in fact a "non-option". It implies:

- Carrying on the current practice along with a dedicated program to Geneva-based missions.
- More coordination among the main relevant stakeholders: OIC General Secretariat, Geneva OIC Permanent Mission, COMCEC, IDB Group, ICDT, in providing technical assistance to MS.
- Increasing capacity building activities in WTO issues.
- Empowering OIC Geneva Office and enhancing its role in WTO matters.

## CONCLUSION

Improving and increasing coordination mechanisms is crucial, because the negotiation process matters in terms of how well States use the WTO institutional system. OIC membership in the WTO is a necessary condition to gain leverage through legal framing; it will provide OIC MS with the possibility of increasing their leverage through coalitional action. The depth and frequency of OIC MS participation in the WTO structure will undeniably constitute a sign of prestige, peer-recognition and technical capabilities.

# ANNEXES

## ANNEX 1: List of the OIC Member States, WTO Members.

COUNTRIES	DATE OF ACCESSION	COUNTRIES	DATE OF ACCESSION
1. Afghanistan	29 July 2016	2. Malaysia	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995
3. Albania	8 September 2000	4. Maldives	31 May 1995
5. Bahrain	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995	6. Mali	31 May 1995
7. Bangladesh	13 December 1993	8. Morocco	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995
9. Benin	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995	10. Mauritania	31 May 1995
11. Brunei	January 1995	12. Mozambique	26 August 1995
13. Burkina Faso	3 June 1995	14. Niger	13 December 1996
15. Cameroon	13 December 1995	16. Nigeria	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995
17. Chad	19 October 1996	18. Oman	9 November 2000
19. Côte d'Ivoire	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995	20. Pakistan	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995
21. Djibouti	31 May 1995	22. Qatar	13 January 1996
23. Egypt	30 June 1995	24. Saudi Arabia	11 December 2005
25. Gabon	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995	26. Senegal	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995
27. Gambia	23 October 1996	28. Sierra Leone	23 July 1995
29. Guinea	25 October 1995	30. Suriname	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995
31. Guinea-Bissau	31 May 1995	32. Tajikistan	2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2013
33. Guyana	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995	34. Togo	31 May 1995
35. Indonesia	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995	36. Tunisia	29 March 1995
37. Jordan	11 April 2000	38. Turkey	26 March 1995
39. Kuwait	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995	40. Uganda	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995
41. <u>Kazakhstan</u>	<u>30 November 2015</u>	42. United Arab Emirates	10 April 1996
43. Kyrgyzstan	20 December 1998	44. Yemen	26 June 2014

## ANNEX 2: List of OIC Member States candidates for accession to the WTO (Observers)

OIC MEMBER STATES CANDIDATES FOR ACCESSION TO THE WTO (OBSERVERS)		MEMBER STATES, NON MEMBERS OF WTO
1. Algeria	7. Libya	1. Palestine
2. Azerbaijan	8. Sudan	2. Turkmenistan
3. Comoros	9. Syria	
4. Iran	10. Uzbekistan	
5. Iraq	11. Somalia	
6. Lebanon		

## ANNEX 3: GROUPS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific countries with preferences in the EU Issues: Agricultural preferences Nature: Geographical Website: <a href="http://www.acp.int/">http://www.acp.int/</a>	WTO members (62): Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Suriname, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Vanuatu, Zambia, Zimbabwe WTO observers (8): Bahamas, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Somalia, Sudan, Timor-Leste Not WTO members or observers (9): Cook Islands, Eritrea, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Federated States of, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Tuvalu
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<b>African Group</b>	African members of the WTO Issues: General Nature: Regional	WTO members (43): Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe
<b>Asian Developing Members</b>	Asian developing WTO members. Announced in document WT/GC/COM/6 of 27 March 2012 Issues: General Nature: Regional Documents: <a href="#">WT/GC/COM/6</a>	WTO members (31): Bahrain, Kingdom of, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, China, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Korea, Republic of, Kuwait, the State of, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Macao, China, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam
<b>APEC</b>	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum Issues: General Nature: Regional Website: <a href="http://www.apec.org">http://www.apec.org</a>	WTO members (21): Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Republic of, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, United States, Viet Nam, Russian Federation
<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of Southeast Asian Nations Issues: General Nature: Regional Website: <a href="http://www.asean.org">http://www.asean.org</a>	WTO members (10): Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam
<b>MERCOSUR</b>	Common Market of the Southern Cone, a customs union (Mercosul in Portuguese) Issues: General Nature: Customs union Website: <a href="http://www.mercosur.int">http://www.mercosur.int</a>	WTO members (4): Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay
<b>G-90</b>	African Group + ACP + least-developed countries Issues: General	WTO members (72): Afghanistan, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Suriname, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liberia, Samoa, Seychelles, Vanuatu, Yemen WTO observers (10): Bahamas, Bhutan, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Timor-Leste Not WTO members or observers (9): Cook Islands, Eritrea, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Federated States of, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Tuvalu
<b>Least-Developed Countries (LDCs)</b>	Least developed countries: the world's poorest countries. The WTO uses the UN list (pdf) available here: <a href="http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/cdp/ldc_info.shtml">www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/cdp/ldc_info.shtml</a> Issues: General: <a href="https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-">https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-</a>	WTO members (36): Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zambia WTO observers (8): Bhutan, Comoros, Ethiopia, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Timor-Leste Not WTO members or observers (3): Eritrea, Kiribati, Tuvalu

	<a href="http://content/uploads/sites/45/publication/ldc_list.pdf">content/uploads/sites/45/publication/ldc_list.pdf</a>	
<b>Small, Vulnerable Economies (SVEs)</b>	Group of developing countries seeking flexibilities and enhanced special and differential treatment for small, vulnerable economies in the negotiations. Issues: General	WTO members (26): Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Plurinational State of, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ecuador, Fiji, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago WTO observers (1): Bahamas
<b>Article XII Members</b>	Article XII Members, or acceded members (RAMs), ie, countries that negotiated and joined the WTO after 1995, seeking lesser commitments in the negotiations because of the liberalization they have undertaken as part of their membership agreements. Excludes least-developed countries because they will make no new commitments, and EU members Issues: General	WTO members (22): Albania, Armenia, Cabo Verde, China, Ecuador, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Republic of, Mongolia, Oman, Panama, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of, Seychelles, Chinese Taipei, Tajikistan, Tonga, Ukraine, Viet Nam
<b>Low-Income Economies in Transition</b>	Seeking to secure the same treatment as least-developed countries. (Georgia formally withdrew, but in the agriculture draft the full list is: Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyz Rep, Moldova) Issues: Agriculture	WTO members (3): Armenia, Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Republic of
<b>Cairns Group</b>	Coalition of agricultural exporting nations lobbying for agricultural trade liberalization. Issues: Agriculture Website: <a href="http://www.cairnsgroup.org">http://www.cairnsgroup.org</a>	WTO members (19): Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, Uruguay, Viet Nam
<b>Tropical Products</b>	Coalition of developing countries seeking greater market access for tropical products Issues: Agriculture	WTO members (8): Bolivia, Plurinational State of, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru
<b>G-10</b>	Coalition of countries lobbying for agriculture to be treated as diverse and special because of non-trade concerns (not to be confused with the Group of Ten Central Bankers) Issues: Agriculture	WTO members (9): Iceland, Israel, Japan, Korea, Republic of, Liechtenstein, Mauritius, Norway, Switzerland, Chinese Taipei
<b>G-20</b>	Coalition of developing countries pressing for ambitious reforms of agriculture in developed countries with some flexibility for developing countries (not to be confused with the G-20 group of finance ministers and central bank governors, and its	WTO members (23): Argentina, Bolivia, Plurinational State of, Brazil, Chile, China, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, Tanzania, Thailand, Uruguay, Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of, Zimbabwe

	recent summit meetings) Issues: Agriculture	
<b>G-33</b>	Also called “Friends of Special Products” in agriculture. Coalition of developing countries pressing for flexibility for developing countries to undertake limited market opening in agriculture Issues: Agriculture	WTO members (47): Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Plurinational State of, Botswana, China, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Korea, Republic of, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Chinese Taipei, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of, Zambia, Zimbabwe
<b>Cotton-4</b>	West African coalition seeking cuts in cotton subsidies and tariffs Issues: Agriculture (Cotton)	WTO members (4): Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali
<b>NAMA-11</b>	Coalition of developing countries seeking flexibilities to limit market opening in industrial goods trade Issues: NAMA	WTO members (10): Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Namibia, Philippines, South Africa, Tunisia, Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of
<b>Paragraph 6 Countries</b>	Group of countries with less than 35% of non-agricultural products covered by legally bound tariff ceilings. They have agreed to increase their binding coverage substantially, but want to exempt some products. (In paragraph 6 of the first version of the NAMA text, later paragraph 8.) Issues: NAMA	WTO members (12): Cameroon, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Cuba, Ghana, Kenya, Macao, China, Mauritius, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Zimbabwe
<b>Friends of Ambition (NAMA)</b>	Seeking to maximize tariff reductions and achieve real market access in NAMA. (Some nuanced differences in positions.) Issues: NAMA	WTO members (35): Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, European Union (formerly EC), Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States
<b>Friends of A-D Negotiations (FANs)</b>	Coalition seeking more disciplines on the use of anti-dumping measures Issues: Rules (anti-dumping)	WTO members (15): Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Hong Kong, China, Israel, Japan, Korea, Republic of, Mexico, Norway, Singapore, Switzerland, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, Turkey
<b>Friends of Fish</b>	Informal coalition seeking to significantly reduce fisheries subsidies. From time to time other WTO members also identify themselves as “Friends of Fish” Issues: Rules (fisheries subsidies)	WTO members (11): Argentina, Australia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, United States
<b>“W52” Sponsors</b>	Sponsors of TN/C/W/52, a proposal for “modalities” in negotiations on geographical indications (the multilateral register for wines and spirits, and extending the higher level of protection beyond wines and spirits) and “disclosure” (patent applicants to disclose the origin of genetic resources	WTO members (109): Albania, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, China, Colombia, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, European Union (formerly EC), Fiji, Finland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Kyrgyz Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Liechtenstein,

	and traditional knowledge used in the inventions). The list includes as groups: the EU, ACP and African Group. * Dominican Rep. is in the ACP and South Africa is in the African Group, but they are sponsors of TN/IP/W/10/Rev.2 on geographical indications Issues: Intellectual property (TRIPS) Documents: <a href="#">TN/C/W/52</a>	Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Moldova, Republic of, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom, Zambia, Zimbabwe
<b>Joint Proposal (in Intellectual Property)</b>	Sponsors of TN/IP/W/10/Rev.4 proposing a database that is entirely voluntary Issues: TRIPS GI register Website: <a href="http://www.wto.org/trips#issues">http://www.wto.org/trips#issues</a> Documents: <a href="#">TN/IP/W/10/Rev.4</a>	WTO members (20): Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Israel, Japan, Korea, Republic of, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Paraguay, South Africa, Chinese Taipei, United States
<b>Pacific Group</b>	Developing Country Members of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Issues: General Nature: Geographical Website: <a href="http://www.forumsec.org/">http://www.forumsec.org/</a>	WTO members (6): Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu Not WTO members or observers (8): Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Federated States of, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Tuvalu

Source : [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/dda\\_e/negotiating\\_groups\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dda_e/negotiating_groups_e.htm)

Last updated: 18 December 2017

#### ANNEX 4: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE WORKING PAPER ON PRACTICAL OPTIONS TO IMPROVE COORDINATION AMONG OIC MEMBER STATES VIS-A-VIS WTO ISSUES (REVIEWED 20/03/2018).

NAME :

TITLE :

MISSION :

##### Section One:

##### The importance and knowledge on the MTS and its implications of OIC Member States

- Which Countries are you representing?
- How many officers do you have working on the WTO issues?
- Are they all from the Ministry responsible for International trade?
- Do these officers also cover other IOs or UN Agencies? If so indicate which ones?
- In the deployment of officers to Geneva, particularly those that come to work on WTO issues, is there any prior training or recognition of particular qualifications, skills or expertise?
- To what extent have you taken advantage of the various capacity-building project/initiatives offered by the OIC institutions (IDB, ICDT), e.g. The Trade Policy Course?
- To what extent have you taken advantage of the WTO Awareness programs to familiarize key stakeholders, e.g. Business Sector, Parliamentarians, Civil Society; etc. on the MTS and the WTO?

##### Section Two:

##### Coordination at the National, Regional and Multilateral Levels

- Which institutions are involved in Trade Policy Formulation and Implementation in your country?
- Do you have a national coordination framework to prepare positions on bilateral, regional and multilateral trade agreements? Who are the stakeholders?
- What are the current WTO coordination groups that your delegation is a member of? How often do they meet to coordinate positions?
- Do OIC Member States Ambassadors hold regular meetings on WTO issues?
- What practical options do you suggest to improve OIC coordination regarding WTO issues in Geneva?

- Should OIC Ambassadors to the WTO be invited to the COMCEC Trade Ministers' meetings? If yes, explain their role at these meetings.

### **Section Three:**

#### **OIC institutions and Member States capacity to identify and implement pro-development reforms and appropriate policies to benefit from the MTS.**

- What are your country's priorities in the WTO negotiations? What are the critical issues?
- Should OIC develop a common position on WTO issues and what should be the areas of focus (Aid for Trade, LDC package, trade's potential for sustainable development, global trade with positive welfare benefits for societies, Buenos Aires Agenda), etc.?
- Given the impasse in the Doha Round, what opportunities exist for OIC to accelerate its regional trade initiatives?
- How can OIC address the supply side constraints that have hindered most Member States from taking full advantage of the flexibilities offered by the MTS?

### **Section Four:**

#### **Improved Communication and flow of information exchange between OIC Member States, OIC Geneva based representatives and OIC institutions and General Secretariat**

- Do you think that the setting up of an OIC Geneva-based coordination machinery facilitated by the Permanent UN Representation of OIC to UN that meets on a regular basis, can improve information and communication flows? How often should this coordination machinery meet?
- Given the small size of several OIC Member States Missions (in particular LDCs) vis-à-vis the many meetings of both the regular Committees and negotiating bodies, do you think the system of designating focal points on agreed areas is useful?
- Have you chaired any WTO Committee or trade negotiating group?
- Do you believe that being designated a focal point or chairing a Negotiating group will improve your capacity to be fully engaged with WTO processes and procedures?
- Do you think that such level of engagement will enhance OIC's opportunity to influence rather than merely follow WTO processes and procedures?
- Do you think that such a responsibility of chairing a negotiating group will enhance the quality of briefings going to OIC Member States, Trade Ministers and the OIC Secretariat and leading to improved OIC responses on priority issues in the current Doha Development Round and on new issues currently proposed at the WTO?
- Given that TPS OIC Agreement is notified under the enabling clause, what would OIC Ambassadors/Member States do to ensure that OIC is accorded Observer Status in WTO?

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AATB: Arab-Africa Trade Bridges

ACP: Africa Caribbean Pacific (Group)

AFT: Aid For Trade

AFTIAS: Aid For Trade Initiative for Arab States

AMS: ASEAN Member State(s)

AMU: Arab Maghreb Union

ASEAN: Association of South East Asian Nations

ASEC: ASEAN Economic Community

ASMEX: Association Marocaine des Exportateurs

AU: African Union

AG: African Group

C4: Cotton Four  
 CARICOM: Caribbean Community  
 CFC: Common Fund for Commodities  
 CFCIM: Chambre Française de Commerce et d'Industrie du Maroc  
 CGTF: Core Group on Trade Facilitation  
 COMCEC: Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the OIC  
 CRNM: CARICOM Regional Negotiating Machinery  
 CUTS: Center for International Trade, Economics and Environment  
 DDA: Doha Development Agenda  
 DDR: Doha Development Round  
 DFQF: Duty Free Quota Free  
 DG: Director General  
 DM Process: Dispute Management Process  
 DSS: Dispute Settlement System  
 DWP: Doha Work Program  
 EBA: Everything But Arms  
 EC; European Community  
 ECA: Economic Commission for Africa  
 ECO: Economic Cooperation Organization  
 ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States  
 EPA: Economic Partnership Agreement  
 ESM: Emergency Safeguard Mechanism  
 EU: European Union  
 GATS: General Agreement on Trade in Services  
 GATT: General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade  
 GSP: Generalized Scheme of Preferences  
 IAIGC: Inter Arab Investment Guarantee Cooperation  
 IBSA: India Brazil South Africa  
 ICC: International Chamber of Commerce  
 ICCI: Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry  
 ICCIA: Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture  
 ICDT: Islamic Center for the Development of Trade  
 ICO: International Coffee Organization  
 ICTSD: International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development  
 IDB: Islamic Development Bank  
 IF: Integrated Framework  
 IGO: Inter-Governmental Organization  
 IICRA: International Islamic Center for Reconciliation and Arbitration  
 ILO: International Labor Organization  
 IO: International Organization  
 IOS: International Organization of Standardization  
 ITC: International Trade Center  
 ITFC: International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation  
 ITU: International Telecommunications Union  
 JITAP: Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Program  
 LAS: League of Arab States  
 LDCs: Least Developed Countries  
 LLDCs: Landlocked Developing Countries  
 MC: Ministerial Conference  
 MERCOSUR: Mercado Común del Sur  
 MS: Member State  
 MTC: Ministerial Trade Committees  
 MTS: Multilateral Trading System  
 NAMA: Non-Agriculture Market Access  
 NTB: Non-Tariff Barriers  
 OAU: Organization of African Unity  
 OECS: Organization of East Caribbean States  
 OIC: Organization of Islamic Cooperation

OTC: Over the Counter  
PIF: Pacific Islands Forum  
PIF(S): Pacific Islands Forum (Secretariat)  
RIA: Regional Integration Agreement  
RISC: Regional and Issue Specific Coalition  
SC: South Center  
SDG: Sustainable Development Goals  
SESRIC: Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries  
SESRTCIC: Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries  
SPS: Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures  
SS CTD: WTO Committee on Trade and Development Special Session  
SS DSB: Dispute Settlement Body Special Session  
SVEs: Small and Vulnerable Countries  
TOBB: The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey  
TPR: Trade Policy Review (Process)  
TPS: Trade Preferential System  
TRIMS: Trade Related Investment Measures  
TRIPS: Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights  
TST: Technical Support Team  
UNCITRAL; United Nations United Nations Commission on International Trade Law  
UNCTAD: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development  
UNDP: United Nations Development Program  
UNECA: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa  
UNECE: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe  
UNEP: United Nations Environment Organization  
UNIDO: United Nations Industry Development Organization  
WAEMU: West African Economic and Monetary Union  
WCO: World Customs Organization  
WG: Working Group  
WHO: World Health Organization  
WIPO: World Intellectual Property Organization  
WTO: World Trade Organization

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