COMMITTEE- WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

AGENDA: ADDRESSING TRADE FRAGMENTATION AND PROTECTIONISM IN AN INCREASINGLY POLARIZED GLOBAL ECONOMY

LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE BOARD

Dear Delegates,

As the Executive Board, we extend our warmest greetings to each of you as we approach the upcoming conference. Your participation and engagement in this year's MUN are pivotal in shaping meaningful dialogue and fostering diplomatic relations.

With the conference fast approaching, we wish to commend your dedication to thorough preparation and intellectual curiosity. Your commitment to understanding complex global issues and advocating for change reflects the ethos of the MUN and the spirit of diplomacy. As delegates, you hold the key to unlocking innovative solutions and driving impactful discussions during the conference. Your unique perspectives and collaborative efforts will be instrumental in simulating real-world diplomatic negotiations and finding consensus on pressing global challenges.

The Executive Board is fully committed to supporting you throughout the MUN conference. We stand ready to provide guidance, resources, and assistance to ensure a successful and enriching experience for all delegates. Your contributions and active participation are fundamental to the success of the conference.

We encourage you to approach the conference with an open mind, a spirit of cooperation, and a commitment to constructive dialogue. Embrace the opportunity to engage with diverse perspectives, build coalitions, and work towards consensus-driven resolutions that reflect the principles of diplomacy and cooperation.

In conclusion, we express our deepest appreciation for your enthusiasm, commitment, and passion for global affairs. Together, let us embody the values of diplomacy, collaboration, and mutual understanding as we work towards a more peaceful and prosperous world.

Best regards,

Executive Board

ABOUT THE COMMITTEE

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is an international organization responsible for regulating and facilitating international trade among nations. Established on 1 January 1995 under the Marrakesh Agreement, the WTO emerged as the successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which had governed international trade since 1948. Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, the WTO provides a rules-based framework for global commerce, aiming to promote predictable, transparent, and non-discriminatory trade relations among its members. The organization currently has 166 members, comprising countries and separate customs territories.

The primary objective of the WTO is to ensure that international trade flows as smoothly, predictably, and freely as possible while recognizing the developmental needs and economic circumstances of its members. Through its multilateral trade agreements, the organization establishes rules governing trade in goods, services, and intellectual property. Its core principles include non-discrimination, transparency, fair competition, and the reduction of unnecessary trade barriers. These principles seek to facilitate economic cooperation and create a stable environment for international trade and investment.

The WTO performs several essential functions in the international trading system. It administers and implements multilateral trade agreements, provides a forum for trade negotiations, and facilitates the settlement of trade disputes between member states. Additionally, it monitors national trade policies, promotes transparency, and offers technical assistance and capacity-building programs to developing and least-developed countries. Various councils, committees, and working groups address specialized areas of trade, including agriculture, trade in services, intellectual property rights, trade and development, and environmental sustainability.

In recent years, the global trading system has faced significant challenges arising from geopolitical tensions, protectionist policies, supply-chain disruptions, and increasing economic fragmentation. Trade restrictions, unilateral tariffs, export controls, and strategic competition between major economies have complicated the functioning of the multilateral trading framework. In this context, the WTO serves as an institutional platform for addressing trade-related disputes through negotiation, consultation, and common rules. However, the organization also faces challenges involving consensus-based decision-making, institutional reform, and the effectiveness of its dispute settlement system.

The WTO committee provides participants with an opportunity to examine contemporary international trade issues and develop policy-oriented solutions through negotiation and diplomacy. Delegates may represent different member states, analyze national trade interests, and discuss issues such as tariffs, trade barriers, supply-chain resilience, and international economic cooperation. The committee encourages participants to understand the relationship between domestic economic policies and international trade obligations while balancing national development priorities with the need for a stable, rules-based trading system. Through informed debate and collaborative negotiations, participants can explore practical approaches to addressing trade fragmentation and protectionism in an increasingly polarized global economy.

MANDATE OF WTO

WTO has been established to help its members use trade as a means to raise living standards, create jobs and improves people's lives. The WTO operates the global system of trade rules, helps developing economies build their trade capacity and seeks to create a more inclusive trading system.

Global rules of trade provide assurance and stability. Consumers and producers know they can enjoy secure supplies and greater choice of the finished products, components, raw materials and services they use. Producers and exporters know foreign markets will remain open to them.

This leads to a more prosperous, peaceful and accountable economic world. Decisions in the WTO are typically taken by consensus among all members and they are ratified by members' parliaments. Trade frictions are channelled into the WTO's dispute settlement process, where the focus is on interpreting agreements and commitments and how to ensure that members' trade policies conform with them. That way, the risk of disputes spilling over into political or military conflict is reduced.

By lowering trade barriers through negotiations among member governments, the WTO's system also breaks down other barriers between peoples and trading economies. At the heart of the system, known as the multilateral trading system, are the WTO's agreements, negotiated and signed by a large majority of the world's trading economies, and ratified in their parliaments. These agreements are the legal foundations for global trade. Essentially, they are contracts, guaranteeing WTO members' important trade rights. They also bind governments to keep their trade policies transparent and predictable which is to everybody's benefit.

The agreements provide a stable and transparent framework to help producers of goods and services, exporters and importers conduct their business. The goal is to improve the welfare of the peoples of the WTO's members.

By lowering trade barriers through negotiations among members, the WTO's system also breaks down other barriers between peoples and trading economies.

HISTORY OF WTO

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is the largest intergovernmental organization devoted to regulating and facilitating trade between nations. Its founding in 1995 marked the culmination of eight years of trade negotiations known as the Uruguay Round conducted between signatories of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). In founding the WTO, the GATT signatories sought to create an organization capable of regulating trade in a globalized economy.

Born out of the Bretton Woods System in 1947, GATT was a legal agreement aimed at reducing and eliminating trade barriers such as tariffs and quotas. While GATT provided a foundational set of rules for international trade, it lacked a system for enforcing the rules and mediating trade disputes between countries. Another key concern for GATT signatories was that the agreement did not cover trade in services and intellectual property, which accounted for a growing proportion of global trade flows throughout the 20th century. With these issues in mind, GATT signatories launched the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations in 1986. Eight years later, the negotiations culminated in the creation of the WTO, which subsumed GATT and extended the multilateral trade system into several new areas.

The activities of the WTO fall into five broad categories: trade negotiations, implementation and monitoring, dispute settlement, building trade capacity, and outreach. Through trade negotiations, WTO member governments have reached agreements aimed at liberalizing trade in goods, services, and intellectual property. Member governments must submit proof that they are implementing these agreements to WTO councils tasked with monitoring their compliance. When one country accuses another of violating these agreements, WTO-appointed independent experts settle the dispute by issuing a judgement on the matter. To build trade capacity in developing countries, the WTO includes special provisions for developing countries in trade agreements, offers educational courses for governmental officials, and facilitates third-party investment in developing countries. Finally, the WTO conducts outreach activities with NGOs, politicians, and other international organizations, in addition to PR activities.

Our committee will simulate a meeting of the WTO's Ministerial Conference, which occurs biannually and brings together trade ministers from all 164 member states. These member states account for 98% of world trade and represent diverse economic, political, and social systems. All decisions must be made by consensus, which requires that no member formally rejects a resolution. Given the plurality of members' backgrounds, reaching a consensus requires a high-level of negotiating tact, a willingness to compromise, and a bit of ingenuity. That being said, this committee does NOT require unanimous vote. As long as the majority of non-abstaining votes are in favor, the draft resolution is passed. If a draft resolution passes, then subsequent draft resolutions will not be voted on. If otherwise, the next draft resolution introduced will be considered.

TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

The World Trade Organization came into being in 1995. One of the youngest of the international organizations, the WTO is the successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) established in the wake of the Second World War. So while the WTO is relatively young, the multilateral trading system that was originally set up under the GATT is over 75 years old.

The past 75 years have seen an exceptional growth in world trade. Merchandise exports have grown on average by 6% annually. This growth in trade has been a powerful engine for overall economic expansion and on average trade has grown by 1.5 times more than the global economy each year. Total exports in 2024 were 250 times the level of 1948. The GATT and the WTO have helped to create a strong and prosperous trading system contributing to unprecedented growth.

The system was developed through a series of trade negotiations, or rounds, held under the GATT. The first rounds dealt mainly with tariff reductions but later negotiations included other areas such as anti-dumping and non-tariff measures. The 1986-94 round - the Uruguay Round - led to the WTO's creation. The negotiations did not end there. In 1997, agreements were reached by groups of WTO members on liberalizing telecommunications services, establishing tariff-free trade in information technology products, and opening up their financial services.

In 2000, new talks started on agriculture and services. These were incorporated into a broader work programme launched at the fourth WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar, in November 2001. The past 75 years have seen an exceptional growth in world trade. Merchandise exports have grown on average by 6% annually.

Negotiations have resulted in major updates to the WTO rulebook. A revised Government Procurement Agreement - adopted at the WTO’s 8th Ministerial Conference in 2011 - expanded the coverage of the original agreement by an estimated US$ 100 billion a year. At the 9th Ministerial Conference in Bali in 2013, WTO members struck the Agreement on Trade Facilitation, which aims to reduce border delays by slashing red tape. When fully implemented, this Agreement - the first multilateral accord reached at the WTO - will cut trade costs by more than 14% and will lift global exports by as much as US$ 1 trillion per year.

The expansion of the Information Technology Agreement - concluded at the 10th Ministerial Conference in Nairobi in 2015 - eliminated tariffs on an additional 200 IT products valued at over US$ 1.3 trillion per year. Another outcome of the Conference was a decision to abolish agricultural export subsidies, fulfilling one of the key targets of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. An amendment to the WTO’s Intellectual Property Agreement entered into force in 2017, easing poor economies’ access to affordable medicines. The same year saw the Trade Facilitation Agreement enter into force.

The 12th Ministerial Conference in June 2022 saw the adoption of a landmark Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies which entered into force in September 2025 following the ratification of the Agreement by two-thirds of WTO members. The Agreement establishes new, binding, multilateral rules for curbing harmful subsidies, which are a key factor in the widespread depletion of the world's fish stocks. It is the WTO's first multilateral agreement with environmental sustainability at its core.

ABOUT THE AGENDA

The global economy has historically relied on international trade, economic interdependence, and multilateral cooperation to promote growth, development, and stability. However, increasing geopolitical tensions, strategic rivalries, economic nationalism, and disruptions in global supply chains have challenged the foundations of an integrated global trading system. Trade fragmentation and protectionism have emerged as significant concerns, influencing the movement of goods, services, capital, and technology across borders. The agenda, “Addressing Trade Fragmentation and Protectionism in an Increasingly Polarized Global Economy,” seeks to examine these challenges and explore cooperative approaches to promoting a resilient, inclusive, and rules-based international trading system.

Trade fragmentation refers to the division of global trade and economic relations into separate regional, political, or strategic blocs. Rather than operating through common rules and interconnected markets, countries increasingly prioritise strategic partnerships, national security, and domestic economic interests. This trend can be observed through changes in supply chains, export restrictions, investment screening, and the increasing use of trade policy as an instrument of geopolitical influence. While some countries seek to reduce dependence on particular markets, such measures can also increase production costs, limit market access, and create uncertainty for international businesses.

Protectionism, meanwhile, involves government measures designed to protect domestic industries from foreign competition. Tariffs, import quotas, subsidies, local-content requirements, and regulatory restrictions are among the instruments commonly associated with protectionist policies. Governments may introduce such measures to support domestic employment, strengthen strategic industries, protect national security, or respond to perceived unfair trade practices. However, extensive or discriminatory restrictions can provoke retaliatory actions, reduce international trade, and undermine the principles of economic cooperation.

1. Geopolitical Tensions and the Changing Nature of Global Trade

One of the major reasons behind trade fragmentation is the growing rivalry between powerful economies. Trade relations between the United States and China, for instance, have increasingly been influenced by concerns surrounding technology, national security, and economic competitiveness. Tariffs, export restrictions, and controls on strategic products demonstrate how economic policies can become closely connected to geopolitical interests.

International conflicts and sanctions have also affected the movement of goods, energy, and essential commodities. As countries attempt to protect their interests and reduce dependence on particular trading partners, global supply chains are being reorganised.

The IMF's research on geo economic fragmentation examines how geopolitical divisions can affect trade, investment, and international cooperation. These developments raise an important question for the committee: How can countries protect their national interests without creating unnecessary barriers to global economic cooperation?

2. Impact on Developing Countries and Global Economic Inequality

Although trade fragmentation affects countries across the world, its consequences are not the same for everyone. Developing countries often depend on international trade to generate employment, attract investment, access technology, and support economic growth. When major economies introduce tariffs or restrict trade, smaller economies may face difficulties accessing markets or maintaining stable supply chains.

At the same time, changes in global production networks can create new opportunities. Countries may attract businesses looking to diversify their manufacturing and sourcing locations. However, taking advantage of these opportunities requires infrastructure, skilled labour, reliable institutions, and access to finance.

The IMF has examined how exposure to geopolitical fragmentation differs across countries and regions. This makes it important for delegates to consider not only the interests of major economic powers but also the needs of developing and least-developed countries.

The committee should explore ways to promote fairer trade opportunities, strengthen economic resilience, and ensure that developing countries are not left behind as global trade patterns change.

3. Challenges to International Trade Governance

The World Trade Organization was established to provide a common framework for international trade and to encourage cooperation between its members. Its rules seek to make trade more predictable and address disputes between countries. However, the increasing use of tariffs, subsidies, export controls, and other restrictions has created challenges for the multilateral trading system.

Countries often argue that trade restrictions are necessary to protect domestic industries, respond to unfair practices, or safeguard national security. Other countries may view these measures as barriers that disadvantage their exporters and undermine fair competition.

This creates a difficult balance between national priorities and international obligations. The WTO's World Trade Report 2023 emphasises the importance of strengthening international cooperation rather than allowing global economic relations to become increasingly divided.

Delegates should discuss how the WTO and other international institutions can improve dialogue, strengthen transparency, and address disputes more effectively. The focus should be on developing practical mechanisms that allow countries to raise legitimate concerns without unnecessarily disrupting international trade.

4. Building a More Inclusive and Sustainable Trading System

Addressing trade fragmentation is not simply about removing every trade restriction. Countries also need to consider economic security, environmental protection, domestic development, and the resilience of their supply chains. The challenge lies in finding a balance between these priorities and maintaining meaningful international cooperation.

One possible approach is to promote trade diversification, allowing countries to develop a wider range of trading partners and reduce excessive dependence on individual markets. Greater cooperation in critical sectors, improved trade infrastructure, and support for developing economies can also help strengthen global economic resilience.

Sustainability must form part of this discussion. As countries introduce climate-related regulations and invest in green technologies, their trade policies can affect producers and exporters around the world. International cooperation is important to ensure that environmental objectives are pursued while considering the economic circumstances of developing countries.

The WTO's work on re-globalisation highlights the potential of greater economic integration to support a more secure, inclusive, and sustainable future.

Conclusion

Trade fragmentation and protectionism are not challenges that any single country can resolve on its own. Their effects extend across borders, influencing businesses, workers, consumers, and national economies. While governments have legitimate reasons to protect their industries and address security concerns, excessive restrictions can weaken trust and make international cooperation more difficult.

This agenda provides delegates with an opportunity to understand the reasons behind the growing divisions in global trade and examine their consequences for countries at different levels of development. It encourages discussion on how international institutions can be strengthened, how developing economies can be supported, and how countries can cooperate despite their political and economic differences.

Ultimately, the objective is to explore a global trading system that recognises national interests while preserving the benefits of international cooperation. Through constructive dialogue, practical policy proposals, and a commitment to inclusive development, the international community can work towards addressing the challenges posed by fragmentation and protectionism.

GEOPOLITICAL STATES OF TRADE FRAGMENTATION

1. US-CHINA TRADE RIVALRY AND ECONOMIC SANCTIONS

For decades, the global economy rested on the premise that international trade was beneficial despite geopolitical differences. The rules of the multilateral trading system, established with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1947 and embedded in the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995, were crafted for a world where governments rarely used trade to achieve geopolitical goals. That world is now under threat.

The United States and China, whose growing trade integration has shaped the past three decades of globalization, now often refer to each other as geopolitical rivals. They increasingly use trade policy to advance strategic objectives-limiting technology transfers, restricting exports of critical products, pursuing national security goals. Many observers fear that the return of geopolitics will fragment the global economy, unraveling decades of integration.

Yet this pessimistic outcome is not inevitable. It shows that even strategic rivals can benefit from trade cooperation. The problem is that the return of geopolitics is at odds with the existing institutional framework, which was designed for a different era. If the trading system is to survive, it must adapt to a world where countries use trade policy to advance geopolitical objectives.

Standard economic models assume governments strive to improve the welfare of their citizens. In this setting, a country raises tariffs to increase its real income at the expense of trading partners by improving its terms of trade-the price of its exports relative to imports. Since all countries face the same incentives, uncoordinated tariff policy traps them in a situation of inefficiently high protection and low welfare. Trade agreements exist to escape this trap through coordinated tariff reductions.

Geopolitical rivalry changes the calculation, raising questions about the sustainability of trade cooperation. Drawing on the realist tradition in international relations, we suppose that rival governments care not only about their absolute welfare but also about their relative power-how they stack up against adversaries. Policy decisions are shaped by both economic gain and strategic advantage.

Consider a government seeking dominance in the semiconductor industry. It will design trade policies not only to expand its domestic chip sector but also to shrink its rival's. A tariff becomes attractive because it damages foreign competitors, transforming trade policy from a tool of economic management into an instrument of strategic competition. Manipulation of the terms of trade is no longer the only reason to use trade policy in a world where countries have geopolitical objectives.

The international relations scholar John Mearsheimer captured this logic in his classic book *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. States motivated by relative power concerns, he writes, are likely to forgo large gains in their own power if such gains give rival states even greater power. This logic has significant implications for trade policy: A country might reject a highly beneficial trade deal if it would make its adversary stronger, or it might implement a damaging trade measure because it would be even more damaging to its adversary.

Does this mean trade cooperation is doomed? Not necessarily. Even in a model where governments care about their relative geopolitical power, the results for trade cooperation are more hopeful than many “realists” would expect.

It is true that the emergence of geopolitical rivalry drives up tariffs in a noncooperative setting. If hurting your rival is part of your objective, protectionist measures become more attractive, even if it lowers income. This results in a noncooperative equilibrium (or Nash equilibrium, in game theory), which features higher tariffs and less trade than in a world without rivalry, because both governments use trade policy to harm the other country.

Nevertheless, geopolitical rivalry doesn’t change the fact that economic efficiency still matters. As long as they care at least somewhat about their citizens’ welfare, governments that start from a position of non-cooperation could adopt policies that make both countries better off. Unless rivalry becomes so extreme that governments care only about dominating their adversary, they would still negotiate with each other to increase economic efficiency and thus their citizens’ welfare. Enlightened self-interest-the same force that drove post war trade liberalization-remains a viable foundation for cooperation, even between strategic adversaries.

Yet even if cooperation remains possible, the transition from one equilibrium to another poses serious difficulties. It took decades of negotiations under GATT/WTO rules to move from the high-tariff world that emerged during World War II to a new, low-tariff era. Its two key pillars, reciprocity and non-discrimination, served the trading system well by helping governments move from a noncooperative to a cooperative equilibrium.

What are the consequences for the trading system of the eruption of geopolitical rivalry today? Governments that care about relative power threaten to impose higher tariffs to hurt their rivals.

The old agreement no longer reflects the new reality. A new cooperative equilibrium is needed. The question is how government can get there.

Two paths are possible. The first is what we call “war and redemption.” Countries allow the old agreement to collapse, triggering a trade war that pushes tariffs higher. Eventually, governments negotiate a new agreement through traditional reciprocal tariff reductions. This path is economically costly and would likely require lengthy negotiations but fits within the existing framework of multilateral trade rules.

The second path is more efficient but requires institutional innovation. Countries negotiate an immediate transition, avoiding economic disruption. But this adjustment involves moving along the frontier of possible efficient outcomes. To sustain cooperation, the country for which the geopolitical shock is less severe must make concessions that reduce its welfare relative to the status quo. This is neither reciprocal nor mutually advantageous in the traditional sense, and the WTO’s foundational principle of reciprocity cannot accommodate it.

The challenge deepens in the multilateral world. Along with reciprocity, the principle of non-discrimination might not facilitate adjustment, as it requires that any trade benefit extended to one member be extended to all. But when two rivals need to transfer economic benefits between each other, third countries are excluded and face consequences.

The 2020 Phase One agreement between the United States and China illustrates the problem. The deal, intended to ease trade tensions, included Chinese commitments to buy specific quantities of US goods. World Bank research at the time of the agreement predicted that although both countries would have gained relative to continued escalation, exporters in Europe, Latin America, and elsewhere would have been hurt if China had redirected imports from those regions to the US. The fact that the agreement was struck outside multilateral trade rules points to a deeper problem: The current system cannot accommodate the adjustments that geopolitical rivalry demands.

If the multilateral trading system is to remain relevant, it must create space for geopolitical adjustment while protecting third countries. There is a precedent for such an exemption. The trading system already accommodates certain forms of discrimination-for instance, allowing members to form preferential trade agreements, such as through free trade areas. These agreements advance the goal of liberalizing trade as long as they meet strict conditions: They cover “substantially all trade” among members and do not raise barriers against non-members. A geopolitical exemption would serve a different purpose: accommodating rivalry between strategic competitors while minimizing damage to the broader multilateral system.

The exemption would require that any discriminatory adjustments between rivals leave world prices between the rivals and third countries unchanged, thus limiting trade diversion. Implementing such a rule would be technically complex. But the alternative is worse: Geopolitical adjustment happens either outside the multilateral framework, undermining existing trade rules and imposing costs on neutral countries, or doesn't happen at all, leaving the world trapped in destructive trade conflicts.

We argue that the return of geopolitics does not eliminate the economic case for cooperation. Even countries engaged in strategic rivalry can benefit from negotiated agreements. The fundamental logic that sustained decades of trade opening remains intact. But new mechanisms are needed if geopolitical rivals are to adjust their trade relationships without engaging in disruptive trade wars or imposing undue costs on third countries.

The trading system has adapted before when circumstances changed-adding new agreements as the global economy evolved during multiple rounds of negotiations. The challenge today is to undertake a similar adaptation for geopolitical realities, preserving the core functions of the system while updating its rules for a changed world. The geopolitical exemption we propose would provide such a mechanism, establishing safeguards that maintain the integrity of the multilateral system while acknowledging the reality of strategic competition.

2. RISE OF ECONOMIC NATIONALISM AND PROTECTIONIST POLICIES

After years of shocks-including the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine-countries are reevaluating their trading partners based on economic and national security concerns. Foreign direct investment flows are also being re-directed along geopolitical lines. Some countries are reevaluating their heavy reliance on the dollar in their international transactions and reserve holdings.

All of this is not necessarily bad. Given the recent history of events, policymakers are increasingly-and justifiably-focused on building economic resilience. But if the trend continues, we could see a broad retreat from global rules of engagement and, with it, a significant reversal of the gains from economic integration.

New trade restrictions have increased sharply-more than tripling since 2019-while financial sanctions have also expanded. The geopolitical risk index has spiked in 2022 following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Despite these trends, there are not yet clear signs of deglobalization at the aggregate level. Since around the time of the global financial crisis, when the 1990s-early 2000s hyper-globalization came to an end, the ratio of goods trade to GDP has been roughly stable-fluctuating between 41 and 48 percent. But under the surface, there are increasing signs of fragmentation. Trade and investment flows are being redirected along geopolitical lines.

For example, China's share in U.S. imports declined by 8 percentage points between 2017 and 2023 following a flare-up in trade tensions. During the same period, the U.S. share in China's exports dropped by about 4 percentage points. And direct trade between Russia and the West collapsed following the invasion of Ukraine and subsequent sanctions on Russia.

Why have we not seen an even bigger impact of de-coupling between geopolitical rivals on global trade?

This is because some trade and investment are being re-routed through third-party countries, partially offsetting the erosion of direct links between the U.S. and China. Since 2017, greater Chinese presence in a country-measured either through exports or announced greenfield investment-has been associated with increased exports of that country to the U.S. The emergence of these "connector" countries-perhaps most notably Mexico and Vietnam-may have helped cushion the global economic impact of direct trade decoupling between the U.S. and China. But whether it has helped to diversify exposures and increase supply chain resilience remains an open question.

The path forward will depend on policymakers. They may accept such rerouting of trade and FDI in order to preserve some of the gains of economic integration. Or they may continue to raise barriers for cross-border trade and investment, further breaking both direct and indirect links between politically distant countries. Trade between the rival Western and Eastern blocs was significantly depressed during the Cold War, relative to trade within these blocs. Thus far, today's fragmentation is not significantly different from the initial years of the Cold War. However, compared to the average "between-bloc trade shortfall" during the entire Cold War period, fragmentation so far is an order of magnitude smaller.

But there is still cause for concern. Trade fragmentation is much costlier this time around because unlike the start of the Cold War when goods trade to GDP was 16 percent, now that ratio is 45 percent. Moreover, while back then countries within a bloc were taking off trade restrictions, now we are in an environment of growing protectionism with several countries turning inward.

The potential role of non-aligned countries in the current trade frictions also makes the situation today different from the Cold War experience. The evidence suggests such countries did not play an important role serving as connectors between rival blocs during the Cold War-likely because they had a much smaller economic footprint and global supply chains were not yet developed. Today, they have greater economic and diplomatic heft and are much more integrated into the global economy. Their role as connectors this time round can help attenuate some of the costs of fragmentation. Data on currency use in international trade and finance is sparser and comes with longer lags than trade figures. Even so, we are so far not seeing a significant impact. Despite increased geopolitical risks, the latest data show that the U.S. dollar remains dominant. According to SWIFT, it accounts for over 80 percent of trade finance, likely because much of commodity trade continues to be invoiced and settled in dollars. It also accounts for nearly 60 percent of FX reserves despite the gradual diversification of FX reserves away from the dollar and partly into non-traditional reserve currencies such as the Australian dollar, and the Canadian dollar.

If fragmentation deepens, what would be the economic cost? And how will those costs be transmitted?

Trade is the main channel through which fragmentation could reshape the global economy. Imposing restrictions on trade would diminish the efficiency gains from specialization, limit economies of scale, and reduce competition. The capacity of trade to incentivize within-industry reallocation and generate productivity gains would be stifled. Less trade would also imply less knowledge diffusion, a key benefit of integration, which could also be reduced by fragmentation of cross-border direct investment. A useful example is Brexit. Because of the extensive interlinkages between Europe and the UK, Brexit is thought to have had a sizable negative effect on the UK economy.

There would also be costs from financial fragmentation. It would limit capital accumulation-because FDI would be reduced-and affect the allocation of capital, asset prices, and the international payment system. Financial fragmentation could also lead to weaker international risk sharing, resulting in higher macro-financial volatility for individual countries, and higher crisis risks due to idiosyncratic shocks[5]. The global payment system could become fragmented along geopolitical lines with the emergence of new payment platforms with limited or no interoperability. This could lower efficiency, and lead to fragmented standards and regulation.

Some emerging and developing economies could benefit from fragmentation in its mild forms as trade and FDI gets redirected towards them. However, as a group they would be disproportionately negatively impacted by more severe forms of fragmentation. These economies rely more on imports and exports of key products, including commodities, for which it is harder and more costly to find new markets and suppliers. Furthermore, emerging markets and developing economies are heavily dependent on FDI from advanced economies, the main source of global investment. They would also be left without positive spillovers from FDI to local firms in the case of friend-shoring or reshoring, when FDI is relocated to “friendly” countries in the other bloc or home.

Fragmentation would also inhibit our efforts to address other global challenges that demand international cooperation. The breadth of these challenges-from climate change to AI-is immense. Strengthening the trading system would require restoring a fully functioning WTO dispute settlement mechanism. It will also require making more progress on dealing with subsidies and national security trade restrictions and developing international rules and norms on the appropriate use and design of industrial polices.

To strengthen the international monetary system, concerted efforts are needed to prevent fragmentation of the global payment system and related standards and regulations. We also need to ensure a well-resourced and efficient global financial safety net, improve measurement and monitoring of cross-border crypto flows, and maintain global dialogue on debt restructuring.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF PROTECTIONISM

International trade has become an essential part of the global economy, connecting countries through the exchange of goods, services, investment, and technology. It allows businesses to access international markets, consumers to benefit from a wider range of products, and developing countries to participate in global production networks. However, the growing use of protectionist policies has raised concerns about the stability and fairness of international trade. While governments often introduce tariffs, subsidies, and trade restrictions to protect domestic industries or respond to economic and security concerns, these measures can also create consequences that extend beyond national borders.

Protectionism can affect the global economy by increasing the cost of imported goods, disrupting supply chains, and reducing the efficiency of international trade. When countries impose tariffs or restrict the movement of essential products, businesses may face higher production costs and difficulties in obtaining raw materials. These challenges can influence the prices paid by consumers and make it more difficult for companies to maintain stable operations. The effects are particularly significant when restrictions involve critical sectors such as energy, food, technology, and manufacturing.

Protectionism also has wider consequences for developing economies. Many developing countries rely on exports, foreign investment, and participation in global value chains to support economic growth. When international trade becomes more restricted, these countries may face reduced market access, higher import costs, and difficulties attracting investment. The IMF's research on geoeconomic fragmentation suggests that emerging market and developing economies can experience disproportionately large income losses because of their dependence on international trade and limited capacity to absorb external shocks.

Another important concern is inflation. When trade barriers increase the cost of imported goods or raw materials, businesses may pass some of these costs on to consumers. Disruptions in the supply of food, energy, and industrial inputs can further contribute to price volatility. IMF research on commodity markets highlights how trade fragmentation can cause significant changes in commodity prices, particularly in strategically important mineral and agricultural markets.

The economic consequences of protectionism are therefore not distributed equally. While certain domestic industries may benefit from protection against foreign competition, consumers and businesses dependent on imports may face higher costs. Similarly, countries with stronger financial resources and diversified economies may be better positioned to adapt than those with limited economic capacity. This creates important questions about fairness, development, and the distribution of the benefits of international trade.

Understanding these challenges is essential for developing effective international responses. The objective is not simply to eliminate every trade restriction, but to examine how governments can pursue legitimate economic and security priorities while minimising unnecessary harm to global trade. Strengthening multilateral cooperation, improving supply chain resilience, supporting developing economies, and promoting transparent trade policies can contribute to a more stable and inclusive international economic system. The agenda therefore invites delegates to explore how protectionism can be addressed while ensuring that economic growth and international trade remain accessible to countries at different stages of development.

On the 24th of February, Russia invaded Ukraine. Beyond the direct suffering and humanitarian crisis, the entire global economy has felt the adverse effects of the war. As the invasion disrupted production in Ukraine, and Western countries imposed sanctions on Russia, the global supply of key commodities was curtailed. Within days, energy, food, and certain mineral prices shot to record levels.

The disruption in global trade following the Russian invasion of Ukraine is not an isolated event. In recent years, trade restrictions in sectors like commodities and semiconductors, which are seen as crucial for national security and strategic competition, have increasingly taken precedence over global economic integration and its shared benefits. The United Kingdom’s decision to leave the European Union in 2016 is an example of this broader trend. The world‘s two largest economies, the United States and China, have imposed a series of bilateral trade barriers in recent years. And, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries chose to restrict exports of medical goods and foodstuffs. While trade barriers were generally on a decreasing path throughout the 20th century, this trend has reversed over the past decade. These events may be early signs of broader geoeconomic fragmentation-defined as a policy-driven reversal of economic integration, of which international trade is a central component.

The rise in trade barriers in recent years has accompanied a plateauing of global trade integration. In the three decades preceding the global financial crisis, global incomes and international trade increased in tandem. For many low-income countries and emerging market economies, this integration into the global economy was a crucial contributor to their development, providing access to affordable imports, extensive export markets, and foreign technology.

How do trade barriers affect living standards? Let’s zoom out for a second to explain.

Consider a country that imposes an import tariff on semiconductors. First, for consumers who buy computers, a tariff immediately increases the price they pay. Of course, domestic firms can try to introduce competing models or expand production. But this is costly-in particular because consumers had already revealed over time their preference for the foreign chips by their purchasing choices, either because of lower prices or product characteristics. Consumers are therefore worse off.

Second, consider the perspective of workers in the country that used to produce semiconductors for export. With shrinking access to their export markets, their incomes tend to fall.

Third, consider the impact on the prices of other goods and services that use computers as inputs. In the professional services sector, for example, accounting firms will now need to charge customers more to cover the higher prices of their computers. These indirect effects through complex supply chains can be large and have knock-on effects on consumers in other countries as well. In sum, higher trade barriers tend to be a double whammy for households. Not only do they lead to higher prices, but they also tend to reduce the incomes households receive.

So what are the potential costs of geoeconomic fragmentation through trade?

We explore different illustrative scenarios using a quantitative multicountry model of international trade that allows us to simulate the impact of changes in trade barriers on prices, trade flows, and incomes. Given the importance of commodities in global trade and recent restrictions, and given that they are produced in a relatively small set of countries, we construct a dataset that allows for significantly more detailed coverage of their trade and production as an input to the model.

This dataset covers 24 aggregated sectors and 136 disaggregated commodities across 145 countries- representing 99 percent of global GDP. Other datasets leave commodities aggregated, treating products as dissimilar as gold and natural gas as perfect substitutes. Our approach allows us to capture the imperfect substitutability of different commodities, along with the fact that production of specific commodities is often concentrated in a few countries. Both of these elements increase the cost of trade barriers.

It is worth noting that our work focuses on the output losses of geoeconomic fragmentation through *trade*. The *total* losses of fragmentation will likely be even larger.

First, we look at a scenario in which trade fragmentation is limited to the elimination of all trade between Russia on one hand and the United States and the European Union on the other, as well as the elimination of trade in high-tech sectors between China and the United States and European Union. This scenario is akin to a broadening of current Russian sanctions to the entire spectrum of trade in goods and services, and expanding beyond the current focus on semiconductor chips to all high-tech goods.

Such a strategic decoupling would lead to permanent GDP losses of 0.3 percent globally, roughly equivalent to the annual output of Norway. This global negative impact masks some heterogeneity. Indeed, as long as the rest of the world keeps trading freely with Russia, China, the United States, and the European Union, some countries may even see small gains. Commodity exporters, for example, that can eventually replace Russia as a key supplier, would see their incomes increase. Some Asian countries would benefit if semiconductor supply chains were relocated from China.

Second, we look at a more severe scenario, geoeconomic fragmentation, in which all countries are forced to choose between either the United States–European Union or the China-Russia blocs, with no trade between these two blocs. In this illustrative scenario, countries are grouped based on how much they trade with either the United States or China.

Permanent losses for advanced economies and emerging markets would be on the order of 2 to 3 percent. And low-income countries would come under significant pressure, losing more than 4 percent of GDP. These losses would deepen risks of debt crises and exacerbate social instability and food insecurity. Poorer countries are typically most at risk from geoeconomic fragmentation because they are heavily dependent on the imports and exports of key products, including commodities, for which it is more costly to find new suppliers.

How large are these losses relative to historic events? To provide some comparison-global GDP losses would be on the order of the 2020 output losses due to COVID. However, these losses would be permanent.

How bad things get would depend not only on the extent of trade restrictions and how countries divide into blocs. The adjustment process itself can be challenging. If fragmentation occurs quickly, it will be very costly for supply chains to adapt. This will also imply greater global GDP losses, as high as 7 percent if adjustment costs are particularly large.

So what can be done to prevent the worst losses from runaway fragmentation, including for the most vulnerable economies? To avoid a proliferation of unilateral trade barriers, the World Trade Organization, including its dispute resolution mechanism, should be reinforced. Multilateral efforts should focus on reforms with high impacts where preferred economic policies of countries are broadly aligned. Yet in the current environment, progress through multilateral consensus may not always be possible. In areas where countries' preferences are not well aligned, deeper integration through regional trade agreements, along with an open and non-discriminatory stance toward other countries, can be a way forward.

Low-income countries, which are the most vulnerable to the adverse growth effects of runaway fragmentation, must not become caught in the crossfire. If and when countries undertake unilateral actions, credible guardrails will be needed to protect the vulnerable and mitigate global spillovers. These guardrails could include, for example, safe corridors for food and medicine, along with multilateral consultations to assess the economic impact of unilateral actions and identify their unintended consequences.

The trend toward geoeconomic fragmentation is a significant challenge that will have far-reaching economic consequences for countries across the world. But by strengthening and modernizing the global trading system, we can overcome these challenges and preserve the large benefits of economic integration.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE GOVERNANCE AND COOPERATION

International trade governance refers to the rules, institutions, and cooperative arrangements through which countries regulate cross-border trade. In an increasingly polarized global economy, these arrangements have become essential for maintaining stability, predictability, and fairness in international economic relations. The World Trade Organization (WTO) remains the central institution of the multilateral trading system. It provides a platform for negotiating trade rules, monitoring national trade policies, facilitating trade, and resolving disputes between member states. Its broader objective is to ensure that international trade contributes to higher living standards, employment, and economic development. However, the global trading system is facing significant pressure. Geopolitical rivalry, economic nationalism, unilateral tariffs, industrial subsidies, export restrictions, and disagreements over development priorities have complicated international cooperation. At the same time, several multilateral trade negotiations have experienced prolonged deadlock, while the WTO's dispute settlement system has faced institutional difficulties. These challenges raise important questions about whether existing trade institutions are sufficiently equipped to respond to the realities of the modern global economy.

The issue is not simply about preserving free trade. It also involves ensuring that trade rules remain responsive to legitimate national concerns, including economic security, public health, environmental protection, technological development, and the interests of developing countries. Effective trade governance must therefore balance openness with regulatory autonomy and economic resilience.

1. ROLE OF WTO IN ADDRESSING TRADE RESTRICTIONS

The WTO was established in 1995 to provide a rules-based framework for international trade. Its agreements cover trade in goods, services, and intellectual property. One of its primary functions is to limit arbitrary or discriminatory trade restrictions by requiring members to comply with agreed obligations, including transparency, non-discrimination, and predictable market access. The principles of most-favoured-nation treatment and national treatment are central to this framework, although WTO agreements also permit certain exceptions under specified conditions. The WTO addresses trade restrictions through several interconnected mechanisms. First, it serves as a forum for negotiations in which members develop, clarify, and update international trade rules. Agreements such as the Trade Facilitation Agreement, which entered into force in 2017, seek to simplify customs procedures and reduce delays at borders. Similarly, the Fisheries Subsidies Agreement adopted in 2022 demonstrates the possibility of developing multilateral rules in areas connected with sustainability and resource management. Second, the WTO promotes transparency and monitoring. Member states are expected to notify relevant laws, regulations, and trade measures, allowing other members to understand and scrutinize changes in trade policy. The Trade

Policy Review Mechanism provides periodic assessments of members' trade policies and practices. Such mechanisms can help identify protectionist measures, improve policy predictability, and reduce uncertainty for businesses and investors.

Third, the WTO offers a formal dispute settlement process. When one member believes that another member has violated WTO obligations, it may request consultations. If consultations fail, the dispute may proceed to adjudication before a panel, subject to the applicable procedures. This system is significant because it provides a legal alternative to unilateral retaliation and enables countries to challenge trade measures through established rules. By the end of 2024, WTO members had circulated 631 requests for consultations since the organization's establishment.

Nevertheless, the WTO's capacity to address trade restrictions depends on members' willingness to comply with their obligations and cooperate in negotiations. The organization does not possess an unrestricted power to prevent every tariff, subsidy, or export control. Its rules contain exceptions, and disputes often involve complex questions concerning national security, public policy, and the interpretation of treaty obligations.

2. CHALLENGES TO MULTILATERAL TRADE AGREEMENTS

Multilateral trade agreements depend on the willingness of a large number of countries to accept common rules and make compromises. Although this approach promotes inclusiveness, it can also make decision-making slow and difficult. WTO decisions are generally based on consensus, meaning that major initiatives often require agreement among members with different economic interests, political priorities, and levels of development. One of the most important challenges is the stagnation of multilateral negotiations. Differences over agricultural subsidies, public stockholding for food security, fisheries subsidies, industrial policy, and development-related flexibilities have made it difficult to reach comprehensive agreements. Developing countries frequently emphasize the need for policy space, special and differential treatment, and improved access to developed-country markets. Developed countries, on the other hand, have raised concerns regarding competitive distortions, transparency, and the effectiveness of existing WTO disciplines.

A second challenge is the increasing use of unilateral and protectionist measures. Governments may impose tariffs, subsidies, export controls, or investment restrictions in response to domestic economic pressures or national security concerns. While certain measures may be justified under WTO exceptions or other applicable rules, their frequent use can create uncertainty and provoke retaliatory action. This can weaken confidence in multilateral commitments and encourage countries to prioritize bilateral arrangements or regional trade blocs.

A third challenge arises from the changing nature of global commerce. Many WTO rules were developed when digital trade, artificial intelligence, cross-border data flows, global value chains, and technologically sensitive products were less prominent than they are today. Consequently, existing agreements may not fully address contemporary questions involving digital taxation, e-commerce, technology transfers, subsidies for strategic industries, and the security of supply chains.

Regional and plurilateral agreements can help countries cooperate when consensus among all WTO members is difficult. They may facilitate deeper commitments in areas such as digital trade, investment, or environmental standards. However, an expansion of agreements outside the multilateral framework may also produce overlapping obligations and unequal participation. Smaller and developing economies may lack the administrative and negotiating capacity required to participate effectively in multiple arrangements.

Therefore, the challenge is to ensure that regional and plurilateral initiatives complement rather than undermine the broader multilateral trading system. The WTO's 2024 World Trade Report emphasized the importance of maintaining an open and predictable trading environment, reducing trade costs, strengthening transparency, and ensuring access to dispute settlement, particularly for low-income economies.

3. REFORMING INTERNATIONAL TRADE INSTITUTIONS AND DISPUTE SETTLEMENT MECHANISM

Reforming international trade institutions has become necessary because the structure of global trade has changed considerably since the WTO was established. Reform discussions concern not only dispute settlement but also negotiations, transparency, institutional functioning, development, and the participation of members in decision-making. At the WTO's Twelfth Ministerial Conference in 2022, members agreed to undertake work on necessary reform of the organization. This commitment was reaffirmed at the Thirteenth Ministerial Conference in 2024. The most immediate institutional concern has been the crisis affecting the WTO's Appellate Body. The Appellate Body became unable to function on 11 December 2019 because members could not reach consensus on the appointment of new members. This situation has affected the final resolution of appeals and created uncertainty regarding the enforceability of panel findings. Although the panel stage continues to operate, the absence of a fully functioning appellate mechanism has weakened the predictability of the dispute settlement system.

Dispute settlement reform involves several competing concerns. Some members have emphasized the need to preserve the independence and authority of adjudicators, while others have raised concerns about judicial overreach, the time taken to resolve disputes, the scope of appellate review, and the interpretation of WTO agreements. Reform efforts must address these concerns without removing the legal certainty that makes rules-based trade governance valuable.

At the Thirteenth Ministerial Conference in 2024, WTO members adopted a decision recognizing progress in dispute settlement discussions and instructing officials to accelerate work on unresolved issues, including appeal or review and accessibility. The WTO has also indicated that proposals have focused on simplifying procedures, reducing costs, improving transparency, and ensuring that the system remains accessible to developing and least-developed countries.

Accessibility is particularly important because legal proceedings can require substantial financial, technical, and administrative resources. A system that is formally available to all members may still be difficult to use for countries with limited institutional capacity. Reforms could therefore consider technical assistance, simplified procedures, improved access to legal expertise, and mechanisms that reduce the costs of litigation.

Reform should also address the WTO's negotiating function. New rules may be needed for areas such as digital commerce, industrial subsidies, climate-related trade measures, supply chain resilience, and emerging technologies. At the same time, new rules should take account of differences in economic development and avoid imposing disproportionate burdens on developing countries.

CONCLUSION

International trade governance is facing a period of institutional and political pressure. The WTO continues to provide a common legal framework, a forum for negotiations, mechanisms for transparency, and a system for resolving trade disputes. However, protectionism, geopolitical tensions, negotiation deadlocks, and the continuing crisis in appellate review have exposed limitations in the existing system.

Reform should focus on restoring a reliable dispute settlement mechanism, improving the effectiveness of negotiations, strengthening transparency, and ensuring that developing countries can participate meaningfully in global trade governance. The objective should not be to eliminate every national trade restriction, since governments may have legitimate public policy and security concerns. Instead, the objective should be to ensure that such measures are transparent, proportionate where applicable, consistent with international obligations, and not used to undermine the wider multilateral system.

For the international community, the central challenge is to maintain cooperation in an environment where economic interests and geopolitical priorities increasingly diverge. A more inclusive and responsive trade governance system can help reduce uncertainty, manage disagreements through legal and diplomatic channels, and ensure that international trade remains connected to sustainable and equitable development.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

1. Can the WTO remain effective without a fully functioning dispute settlement and appellate mechanism?

2. Where should the international community draw the line between legitimate national security measures and disguised protectionism?

3. How can the WTO reform its rules to address emerging challenges involving digital trade, artificial intelligence, green technologies, and strategic industries?

4. Does the increasing use of unilateral tariffs and export controls undermine the principles of multilateral trade governance?

5. Should national sovereignty prevail over international trade obligations during economic and geopolitical crises?

6. Can regional and plurilateral trade agreements strengthen the WTO framework without accelerating global trade fragmentation?

7. How can developing and least-developed countries secure meaningful participation in WTO negotiations and institutional reforms?

8. Should WTO rules be revised to regulate industrial subsidies and state-supported competition among major economies?

9. How can trade governance balance economic security and supply-chain resilience with the benefits of global economic interdependence?

10. Should national security exceptions under international trade law be subject to greater transparency and independent review?

11. Can the WTO's consensus-based decision-making system deliver timely reforms in an increasingly polarized global economy?

12. How should the international trading system balance climate-related trade measures with the principle of non-discrimination?

13. Should WTO dispute settlement prioritize speedy resolution and accessibility over extensive appellate review?

14. How can international trade institutions ensure that the benefits of globalization are distributed more equitably among countries, workers, and communities?

15. Is reforming the existing multilateral trading system sufficient, or does the world require a fundamentally redesigned framework for international trade cooperation?

HOW TO RESEARCH?

The practices enumerated below could be employed by the delegates to explore the research realm. This list of practices is not exhaustive and one may come up with an approach to breaking an agenda down:

1. Read the Background Guide Thoroughly Before the Conference.

2. Analyse Crisis Committee Updates. In cases where a Crisis Committee is being simulated, examine the analysis and plausible rationale behind updates that may be issued a week before the MUN.

3. Conduct Comprehensive Research. Search relevant information and identify supporting documents, including:

- United Nations reports and documents
- News articles
- Scholarly works and research papers
- Government publications and official statements

Categorise and tag the sources according to the relevant sub-themes.

4. Understand the Agenda in Depth. After sufficiently studying the agenda, develop an understanding of its major issues, historical context, and possible policy implications.

5. Study Your Allotted Country's Perspective. Research your country's position on the agenda, including its:

- Foreign policy
- Historical background
- Past actions and decisions
- Official statements and policy priorities

6. Prepare a Country-Specific Stance. Develop arguments and policy positions that reflect your country's perspective and foreign policy objectives.

7. Understand Bilateral and Multilateral Relations. Examine your country's relationships with other states, including:

- Diplomatic ties
- Economic and trade relations
- Strategic partnerships
- Existing conflicts or disagreements
- Participation in international organisations and agreements

8. Identify Cues and Hints in the Background Guide. Carefully examine the Background Guide for implicit references, key issues, suggested approaches, and information that may be relevant during committee proceedings.

9. Follow the Suggested Readings. Review all links, reports, articles, and other resources provided in the Background Guide.

10. Anticipate Potential Sub-Themes. Predict the sub-themes and emerging issues that may be raised during the committee sessions and prepare arguments accordingly.

11. Prepare for Possible Counterarguments. Research opposing perspectives and anticipate questions, criticisms, and challenges that other delegates may raise.

12. Organise Arguments in a Document. Prepare a Word or Pages document to organise your arguments, research, statistics, sources, and potential speeches for quick reference during the committee.

13. Prepare Relevant Questions for the Executive Board. Identify any doubts or clarifications regarding the agenda, committee procedure, or crisis updates.

14. Contact the Executive Board Before the Conference. Use the official email address provided to ask your questions and seek clarification before the conference.

15. Maintain Confidentiality Regarding Your Allotted Country. When contacting the Executive Board, avoid disclosing your allotted country unless it is necessary to obtain clarification regarding your country's policies or position.

ACCEPTED SOURCES AND DOCUMENTS

Documents from the following sources, among others, will be considered credible proof for any allegations made in committee or statements requiring verification:

1. Reuters: Appropriate documents and articles from the Reuters news agency will be used to corroborate or refute controversial statements made in committee.

2. United Nations Documents: Documents published by all United Nations agencies will be considered sufficient proof. Reports from all UN bodies, including treaty-based bodies, will also be accepted.

3. Government Reports: Government reports of a given country, when used to corroborate an allegation concerning that country, will be accepted as proof.

4. Non-Acceptable Sources: Under no circumstances will sources such as Wikipedia, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, or newspapers such as The Guardian and The Times of India be accepted as credible proof. However, these sources may be used for a better understanding of an issue and may also be referenced during debate if the information provided is consistent with the stated position of a government or delegate, who generally represents a government.

DISCLAIMER

Information contained in this research brief is strictly for the educational purpose and does not possess any evidentiary value, nor does it qualify as proof of the occurrence/non-occurrence or existence/non-existence of any fact. The brief is meant only to provide the participants with a modicum of information upon which further research can be built and does not in any manner whatsoever reflect the views or political leanings or any personal opinion and thoughts of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson or Rapporteur. They shall at all points in time maintain neutrality and not have any political affiliations.

HAPPY RESEARCHING!!