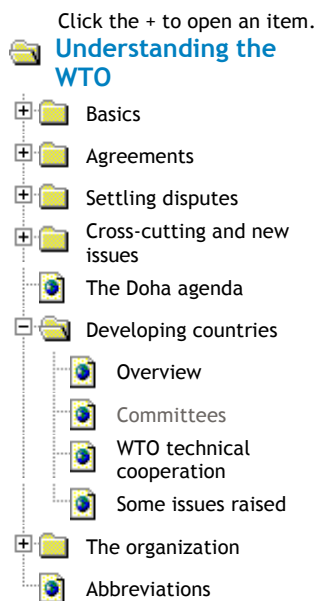




UNDERSTANDING THE WTO: DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Committees

Work specifically on developing countries within the WTO itself can be divided into two broad areas: (i) work of the WTO committees (this heading), and (ii) training for government officials (and others) by the WTO Secretariat as mandated by the committee ([next heading](#)).



More introductory information

- > [The WTO in Brief](#)
- > [10 benefits](#)
- > [10 misunderstandings](#)

Trade and Development Committee

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The [WTO Committee on Trade and Development](#) has a wide-ranging mandate. Among the broad areas of topics it has tackled as priorities are: how provisions favouring developing countries are being implemented, guidelines for technical cooperation, increased participation of developing countries in the trading system, and the position of least-developed countries.

Member-countries also have to inform the WTO about special programmes involving trade concessions for products from developing countries, and about regional arrangements among developing countries. The Trade and Development Committee handles notifications of:

- Generalized System of Preferences programmes (in which developed countries lower their trade barriers preferentially for products from developing countries)
- preferential arrangements among developing countries such as MERCOSUR (the Southern Common Market in Latin America), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA)

Subcommittee on Least-Developed Countries

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The Subcommittee on Least-Developed Countries reports to the Trade and Development Committee, but it is an important body in its own right. Its work focuses on two related issues:

- ways of integrating least-developed countries into the multilateral trading system
- technical cooperation.

The subcommittee also examines periodically how special provisions favouring least-developed countries in the WTO agreements are being implemented.

[The Doha agenda committees](#) [back to top](#)

The Doha Ministerial Conference in November 2001, added new tasks and some new working groups. The Trade and Development Committee meets in “special sessions” to handle work under the Doha Development Agenda. The ministers also set up working groups on Trade, Debt and Finance, and on Trade and Technology Transfer. (For details see the chapter on the Doha Agenda.)



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