

Inclusive Trade Action Group (ITAG) Ministerial Joint Statement at the twelfth WTO Ministerial Conference in Geneva, Switzerland

June 13, 2022

Canada, Chile, Mexico and New Zealand met in Geneva, Switzerland, on the margins of the twelfth WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12), to welcome Colombia and Peru as the newest members of the Global Trade and Gender Arrangement (GTAGA). The GTAGA is a groundbreaking trade instrument on gender, the first agreed by the Inclusive Trade Action Group (ITAG). It is designed to support concrete actions and remove barriers to trade in order to promote women's economic empowerment.

ITAG Ministers believe that Colombia and Peru will make valuable contributions towards their common goal of making international trade policies more gender responsive and inclusive, and they look forward to working with them and further inspiring each other to do even more.

ITAG Ministers invite all WTO members to take another step forward and further demonstrate their commitment to advancing inclusive trade by joining the Inclusive Trade Action Group and Global Trade and Gender Arrangement.

On the occasion of MC12, Canada, Chile, Mexico and New Zealand mark the important progress on inclusive trade issues at the WTO, including on trade and gender and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSME). They also express their deep concern over the humanitarian impact of the war in Ukraine affecting the most vulnerable in Ukraine and globally, including women and girls, which is a set back in achieving a sustainable and inclusive economic and trade recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic.

On the issue of trade and gender, ITAG Ministers are pleased with the work of the WTO Informal Working Group (IWG) on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment, established under Phase 2 of the Buenos Aires Declaration endorsed at MC11. They have confidence that this good work will continue leading up to MC13 so that WTO members increasingly recognize the trade and gender nexus and the role the WTO can play in removing the barriers that women face when aiming to participate in and benefit from trade.

The Joint Statement Initiative on Domestic Services Regulation shows how gender considerations can be addressed by WTO members with the provision on non-discrimination on the basis of gender in services regulations. They look forward to working with all WTO members to make real progress on this; to continue to actively engage and support the efforts of the IWG; and to mainstream gender considerations in all of the work of the WTO.

On the issue of MSMEs, ITAG Ministers are pleased with the work undertaken by the IWG on MSMEs, including the adoption of recommendations and declarations in December 2020, the launch of the Trade4MSMEs platform, and the report from the Coordinator in advance of MC12 on key activities undertaken and outcomes achieved by the IWG since its establishment at MC11. These accomplishments are complementary to ITAG's efforts and are a testimony to the important contribution of the IWG in supporting MSMEs' participation in international trade. ITAG Ministers look forward to continuing parallel efforts to ensure that MSMEs, including those owned or led by women, have access to the right tools, resources and opportunities they need to succeed in global markets.

But more work must be done to ensure everyone benefits from trade. ITAG Ministers share a commitment to work together to help make international trade policies more inclusive in order to ensure that the benefits of trade and investment are more widely shared. They welcome the demonstration of this commitment by a growing number of WTO members, including Argentina and Ecuador which announced their intention to join GTAGA today.