



**HIGH-LEVEL FORUM ON THE CAREC REGION AND THE MULTILATERAL TRADING SYSTEM: DEEPENING
INTEGRATION IN CENTRAL ASIA AND BEYOND**
22-23 October 2025 | WTO Headquarters, Geneva

Speakers Bio



Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala
Director-General, World Trade Organization (WTO)

Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala is the seventh Director-General of the WTO. She took office on 1 March 2021, becoming the first woman and the first African to serve as Director-General. Her term of office will expire on 31 August 2025. On 29 November 2024, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala was reappointed as Director-General for a second four-year term, set to begin on 1 September 2025. She is a global finance expert, an economist and international development professional with over 40 years of experience working in Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America and North America. She is a skilled negotiator and has brokered numerous agreements which have produced win-win outcomes in negotiations. She is regarded as an effective consensus builder and an honest broker enjoying the trust and confidence of governments and other stakeholders.



Mr. Bruce Gosper
Vice-President for Administration and Corporate Management of the Asian Development Bank (ADB)

Mr. Gosper is responsible for the overall management of the operations of the Budget, People, and Management Systems Department; Corporate Services Department; Information Technology Department; Office of the Secretary; Procurement, Portfolio and Financial Management Department; and Office of Safeguards. Mr. Gosper has 40 years of experience working with multilateral and regional institutions dealing with trade and economic policy and running large public sector organizations. Before taking up a role at ADB, he was CEO of the Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade), and subsequently Australia's High Commissioner to Singapore. As Ambassador to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Geneva, he led Australia's multilateral trade initiatives and chaired the WTO General Council and WTO Dispute Settlement Body.



Mr. Xiangchen Zhang
Deputy Director General, WTO

Mr. Zhang formerly served as Vice Minister in the Ministry of Commerce of China. He has long and extensive experience on WTO issues, international negotiations, and policy research. Mr. Zhang served until recently as China's Permanent Representative to the WTO and previously as Deputy Permanent Representative. He has had an extensive career of more than 30 years in international trade, serving as Director of the Department of International Trade and Economic Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation; as Director-General of the Department of WTO Affairs of the Ministry of Commerce; and as Director General of the Department of Policy Research of the Ministry of Commerce. Mr Zhang holds a bachelor's degree in Law, a Master's degree in International Relations and a PhD in International Politics from Peking University.






Mr. Azizbek Urunov
Representative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on WTO - Chief Negotiator

Appointed in June 2023, Mr. Urunov heads the negotiating group for Uzbekistan's WTO accession process and serves as Deputy Chairman of the interdepartmental commission for WTO work. Before his current position, he held a number of other senior roles in the government, including Senior Consultant at the President's Office of Uzbekistan, Director at the Ministry of Investments and Foreign Trade, and Head of Department at the Ministry of Economy of Uzbekistan. He also served as a Visiting Lecturer of Corporate Finance at the Academy of Public Policy under the President of Uzbekistan. He holds a Master's degree in Public Policy from the KDI School of Public Policy and Management.



Mr. Babanyaz Yalakov
Deputy Minister of Finance and Economy of Turkmenistan

Mr. Yalakov was appointed Deputy Minister of Finance and Economy of Turkmenistan in January 2024, a role he continues to fulfill at present. He commenced his professional career in June 2015 at the State Enterprise "Turkmenmironumleri", where he served as Head of the Planned Economy Department. In February 2018, he was appointed Head of the Industrial Sector Department at the State Committee of Turkmenistan on Statistics. From September 2019 to February 2021, Mr. Yalakov served as Head of the Export and Import Analysis Department at the Agency for the Protection from Economic Risks under the Ministry of Finance and Economy of Turkmenistan. In February 2021, he was appointed Head of the Financial Analysis of the Fuel and Energy Sector Division within the Management of Finance and

	Development of Economic Sectors Department at the Ministry of Finance and Economy of Turkmenistan.
	<p>Ms. Zhanel Kushukova Vice Minister of Trade and Integration of the Republic of Kazakhstan</p> <p>She graduated from the North Kazakhstan State University named after Kozybayeva. She started her career as a leading expert on the protection of the domestic market of the Committee on Anti-Dumping Control of the Ministry of Economy and Trade of the Republic of Kazakhstan. She worked in the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Ministry of Economy and Trade, and the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan. She was a member of the Kazakhstan negotiating group on WTO accession, participated in the development of the legal and contractual framework of the Eurasian Economic Union.</p>
	<p>Ambassador Petter Ølberg (Norway) Permanent Representative to the WTO and EFTA</p> <p>A distinguished Norwegian diplomat currently serving as the Ambassador to the WTO and EFTA in Geneva since 2022. At the WTO, he served as Chair of the WTO General Council in 2024. A career diplomat, his extensive professional experience includes serving as Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany (2017-2022), Jordan and Iraq (2009-2013), and various senior leadership roles within the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in Oslo, such as Director General for Economic Relations and Development (2014-2017) and Director of Security (2013-2014). He held international posts including Minister-counsellor in Berlin (2000-2004), roles at the Permanent Norwegian mission in Geneva and the Norwegian embassy in Mexico D.F., underscoring his deep expertise in trade, security, and complex bilateral relations. Mr. Ølberg holds a Master of General Economics from the University of Oslo.</p>
	<p>Ambassador James Baxter Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the WTO (Australia)</p> <p>James Baxter was appointed Ambassador, Australian Permanent Mission to the WTO, Geneva, in September 2023. Prior to taking up his current role, he served as First Assistant Secretary in the Office of Global Trade Negotiations (OTN), in Canberra. He has also served in the Regional Trade Agreements Division as First Assistant Secretary (2019-2020) and Special Negotiator (2017-2018); as Assistant Secretary in the World Trade Organization Trade Policy and Services Branch, OTN (2016-2017); Deputy Chief Negotiator in the China Free Trade Taskforce (2008-2009); and Director, WTO Quarantine</p>

	<p>Disputes Section, OTN (2007-2008).Overseas, he has served as Deputy Head of Mission, Australian Permanent Mission to the WTO, Geneva (2012-2016); Counsellor, Australian Embassy, Brussels (2004-2007); First Secretary, Australian Embassy, Tokyo (1998-2002). Mr. Baxter holds a Bachelor of Laws (1990) and a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) (1988) from the University of Sydney.</p>
	<p>Ambassador Sofia Boza Martinez Permanent Representative to the WTO: Investment Facilitation for Development (Chile)</p> <p>She was appointed as Ambassador of Chile to the World Trade Organization and other international economic organizations in Geneva. Her area of specialization is agricultural policy, with numerous academic publications in recent years. She has also participated in many research projects funded by Chilean and international entities, such as the National Commission for Science and Technological Research, the Foundation for Agrarian Innovation, the Office of Agricultural Studies and Policies and the Agricultural and Livestock Service of Chile, as well as the Secretariat of State of Economy of Switzerland, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, among others. She holds a bachelor's degree in Economics (Honors) from the University of Seville, a master's in Economic Development and Public Policies from the Autonomous University of Madrid, and a PhD in Economics from the Autonomous University of Madrid's Department of Economic Structure and Development Economics. She received an award from the Andalusian Studies Center for her doctoral thesis.</p>
	<p>Ambassador Gerelmaa Davaasuren Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva</p> <p>Prior to her appointment to Geneva, Ms. Gerelmaa had been serving as Director General of the Department of Multilateral Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia since November 2018. She was Deputy Director of the Department from August 2014 to November 2018. She also worked at the Department from 2007 to 2011. Ms. Gerelmaa served at the Permanent Mission of Mongolia to the United Nations in New York from 2011 to 2014. She served at the Permanent Mission of Mongolia to the United Nations Office at Geneva from 2004 to 2007. She served at the Embassy of Mongolia in Paris, France from 2000 to 2003. A career diplomat, she joined the Mongolia Foreign Service in 1998.</p>



Ambassador Ali Sarfraz Hussain
Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the WTO

Ali Sarfraz Hussain is the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Geneva, Switzerland. Since April 2025, he has served as the chair of the WTO's Committee on Agriculture in special session (CoASS), where he leads the Doha agriculture negotiations. He was appointed to his role as Pakistan's envoy to the WTO in July 2023. Prior to his appointment to the WTO, Hussain held the position of Chairman of the Planning and Development Board in Punjab, Pakistan.



Ambassador Revaz Lominadze
Permanent Representative of Georgia to the UN Office and Other International Organizations in Geneva, Georgia

Prior to his appointment, Mr. Lominadze had been serving as Deputy Permanent Representative and Charge d'Affaires to the United Nations Office at Geneva since October 2024. He was Georgia's Ambassador to Switzerland from 2020 to 2024. He served as Georgia's Ambassador to Cyprus from 2016 to 2020, after holding the position of Charge d'Affaires there from 2014 to 2016.

Mr. Lominadze served as Consul at the Embassy of Georgia to Portugal from 2011 to 2014. He was the Head of Administration at Georgia's Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development from 2009 to 2010 and was the Deputy Head of the Protocol Service at the Administration of the President of Georgia from 2004 to 2009. He was also posted at Georgia's Embassy to Ukraine as a Counsellor from 1999 to 2003.



Mr. Lominadze served as Deputy Head of the Protocol Service at the Administration of the President of Georgia from 2004 to 2009, and as Senior Counsellor at the Department for Foreign Relations of the National Security Council of Georgia from 2003 to 2004. He also worked at the Protocol Service of the State Chancellery of Georgia (the President's office) from 1996 to 1999. He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1995.



Mr. Lominadze studied at Tbilisi State University's Department of Classical Philology (Ancient Greek and Latin) from 1990 to 1995.







Mr. Sharaf Sheralizoda
Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan to the Swiss Confederation, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Tajikistan to the UN Office and other international organizations in Geneva



Mr. Sharaf Sheralizoda is the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Tajikistan to the United Nations




	<p>Office in Geneva. Prior to his appointment to Geneva, Mr. Sheralizoda had been serving as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan since 2021. An economist by career, he has held leadership roles in various public offices in Tajikistan, including Head of the Secretariat of the Advisory Council for Improving the Investment Climate, Director of the Centre for Implementation of Public-Private Partnership Projects, and Leading Specialist of the Department of Demographic Statistics and Employment of the State Statistics Committee.</p>
	<p>Ms. Yongjie Li Ambassador, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of China to the WTO</p> <p>Ms. Li was appointed, on 12 September 2025, as the Permanent Representative & Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the World Trade Organization, and Deputy Permanent Representative to the UNOG and other International Organizations in Switzerland, of the People's Republic of China.</p> <p>Prior to the current position, Ms. Li had been Deputy China International Trade Representative of the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) since June 2024. She had served as Deputy Director General and Director General of the Department of Treaty and Law of MOFCOM since 2014, with the main responsibilities of legislation concerning international trade, export control, FDI and ODI; WTO dispute settlement and investment arbitration; and investment agreement negotiations.</p> <p>She had a Bachelor's Degree in Arts from Beijing Foreign Studies University and a Master's Degree in Law from University of International Business and Economics.</p>
	<p>Ms. Erdenetuya Darinchuluun Director General of Trade and Economic Cooperation Policy Department, Ministry of Economy and Development, Mongolia</p> <p>Erdenetuya Darinchuluun is a development policy and project management professional with over 15 years of experience. She currently works as the Director General of Trade and Economic Cooperation Policy Department at the Ministry of Economy and Development.</p> <p>Prior to this, she worked as the Head of International Financial Cooperation at the Ministry of Finance. She also worked as the Head of Economic Cooperation and acting Director for Trade Policy at the Ministry of Economy and Development.</p>

	<p>Prior to Ministry of Economy and Development, she served as the Director's Advisor at the Board of Directors of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), representing Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Marshal Islands, and Timor-Leste, advocating for business process improvement, climate smart mining for critical minerals and development effectiveness.</p> <p>Ms. Erdenetuya previously worked as an Advisor of ODA Policy at the Development Finance Department of the Ministry of Finance, providing support in developing and carrying out key aid effectiveness and development finance policies. She also worked as the Desk Officer for MDBs, including the International Monetary Fund, ADB, World Bank, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development for 10 years, leading and co-leading discussions on medium-term country partnership strategies, programming, processing, and other MDB related policy issues.</p> <p>Prior to joining civil service, she worked as an Investment Manager at Monnis International LLC and its subsidiary companies, overseeing critical mineral and logistics projects. During her time, she managed a rare earth element (REE) and rare metals projects, which led to collaboration with the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology for the Geological Survey of Japan (AIST) to carry out exploration works to identify the enrichment process of high-field strength elements and REE. She also worked as an Operations Specialist at Strayer University in the USA.</p>
	<p>Ms. Gulchin Alasgarova Deputy Head of Trade and Foreign Investment Policy Department, Ministry of Economy, Azerbaijan</p> <p>Ms. Gulchin Alasgarova is the Deputy Head for the Trade Policy and WTO Department, and Trade and Foreign Investment Policy Department in the Ministry of Economy of Azerbaijan since 2018. She is also the Chief Adviser in the Ministry of Economic Development from 2001 until present. Prior to this, she was a Chief Specialist at the Ministry of Economy in 1997 until 2001. She received a medal "For Distinction in Civil Service" (Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 31.07.2018).</p>
	<p>Ms. Maika Oshikawa Director, Accessions Division, WTO</p> <p>Maika Oshikawa has been the Director of the Accessions Division since 2018 and is the first Japanese national to serve as a WTO Director. Prior to joining the Accessions Division, she was Head of the Asia and Pacific Regional Desk at the Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation (ITTC) of the WTO. At the ITTC, she was responsible for managing training and technical assistance activities for thirty WTO members and observers in the Asia and Pacific region,</p>

	<p>as well as partnership arrangements with organizations and institutions based in the region. Before joining the ITTC in 2010, she worked in several divisions at the WTO Secretariat, including the Development Division (2003 to 2010), the Technical Cooperation Division (2001 to 2002), the Office of the Director-General (2000 to 2001) and the Trade Policy Reviews Division (1998 to 2000). Ms Oshikawa obtained a MS in Development Studies from the London School of Economics, a DES in International Economics from the Graduate Institute of International Studies (Switzerland) and a BS in Foreign Services from Georgetown University (United States).</p>
	<p>Ms. Birgit Viohl Head of Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility, WTO</p> <p>Ms. Birgit Viohl is the Head of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility. Ms. Viohl brings extensive experience as a trade facilitation expert, having advised governments on trade negotiations, trade facilitation reforms, and the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. Prior to her current role, Ms. Viohl was based in Indonesia as the Key Trade Expert for the EU-funded Trade Cooperation Facility from 2015-2016. She also served as the UN/CEFACT coordinator of the trade procedure facilitation domain, overseeing projects focused on the digitalisation of trade facilitation and public-private dialogue. From 2004 to 2011, she worked with the Trade Facilitation Section of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).</p>
	<p>Mr. Poul Hansen Chief of the Trade Facilitation Section, Trade Logistics Branch, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD</p> <p>Mr. Poul Hansen is responsible for issues relating to Trade Facilitation at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Division on Technology and Logistics (DTL). UNCTAD's mandate is to assist developing and least developed countries as well as economies in transition integrating into global trade, promoting development- centered globalization and inclusive and sustainable growth and development for these countries.</p> <p>Poul has extensive experience in the area of trade and transport facilitation, having worked for almost 20 years in the UN system on issues such as international trade, transportation, development, international standards, previously working at the UNECE as Secretary for the TIR and Harmonization Conventions. In addition, during his UN career Poul has also worked in the field of international sports policy as Head of the UN Office on Sport and Development and Peace.</p>

	<p>Prior to joining the UN, Poul worked for more than 10 years in the private sector in areas such public affairs, management consulting and logistics with organizations including Ernst & Young, FreightForward Europe (FFE), the International Road Transport Union (IRU) and the Ziegler Group, gaining experience in a number of industries including transportation and logistics, automotive, manufacturing and retail.</p>
	<p>Mr. Samer Seif El Yazal Chief of Section, Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation (ITTC), WTO</p> <p>Mr. Seif El Yazal is currently the Chief of Section for Technical Assistance Coordination, Partnerships and Internship Programmes in the WTO's Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation (ITTC). In this capacity, Mr Seif El Yazal manages the development and implementation of the WTO's strategy and policies to integrate all developing and LDC Members and Observers into the multilateral trading system. He oversees an extensive programme of technical assistance targeting all regions, as well as programmes for academic support, the Young Professionals and long-term placements.</p> <p>Since joining the WTO Secretariat as a trained diplomat in 2001, Mr. Seif El Yazal has represented the WTO in numerous international, regional and national conferences and meetings on international trade and economic matters.</p>
	<p>Mr. Sok Siphana Senior Minister of the Royal Government of Cambodia in charge of International and Multilateral Trade and Economic Affairs</p> <p>Mr. Sok Siphana was appointed as a full-fledged cabinet member as Senior Minister in charge of Special Missions (Multilateral Trade and Economic Affairs) in August 2023. In addition to his portfolio as Senior Minister, he was appointed as the 1st Vice-Chair of the Council of Legal Reform in March 2024, and Chairman of the Trade Policy Advisory Board in April. In May 2024, he began chairing the Committee on the Promotion of Resolutions of Private Sector Issues, which is attached to the Cabinet of the Prime Minister. Previously, he was Advisor to the Royal Government of Cambodia with a rank of Minister in August 2009 attached concurrently with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Supreme National Economic Council (SNEC), and the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC). Subsequently in September 2018, he was reappointed as Senior Advisor with a rank of Senior Minister. From October 2005 to July 2009, he served as Director at the International Trade Center (ITC), a joint technical agency of UNCTAD and WTO in Geneva, Switzerland. From 1999 to 2005, he served as Secretary of State at the Ministry of Commerce, where he acted as</p>

	<p>the lead negotiator in Cambodia's accession to the WTO. Dr SOK is holder of a Juris Doctor (J.D.) from Widener University School of Law in Delaware, United States (1992), a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) from Bond University School of Law in Queensland, Australia (2009), and a "Docteur en Droit" from the Université de Paris II Panthéon-Assas, Paris, France (2022).</p>
	<p>Ms. Zhanar Aitzhan Former Chief Negotiator for Kazakhstan's Accession to the WTO</p> <p>Ms. Aitzhan has held key leadership roles in both international diplomacy and national trade policy. Between 2016 and 2022, she served as Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the UN Office in Geneva and later to the WTO and other international economic organizations until May 2024. . Prior to this, Ms Aitzhanova served as Chief Negotiator for Kazakhstan's accession to the WTO (2005-2015). She also served as Minister of Economic Development and Trade (2010-2011) and Minister for Economic Integration (2011-2016). Ms. Aitzhan holds a Master's degree in Public Administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, a Graduate Diploma from Kazakh State University, and has completed executive studies in economics and public finance at the Joint Vienna Institute.</p>
	<p>Ms. Lyaziza Sabyrova Regional Head, Regional Cooperation and Integration, Central and West Asia Department, Asian Development Bank</p> <p>Ms. Sabyrova leads the regional cooperation and integration team in the Central and West Asia Department of ADB. It includes the Secretariat for the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program. After obtaining her PhD degree in Economics from Indiana University (Bloomington, IN, USA), Lyaziza joined ADB in 2000. She worked on infrastructure projects in the People's Republic of China, and in Central Asia and South Caucasus regions. She was posted in ADB's Resident Mission in the Kyrgyz Republic from 2006-2008. In the following three years, she was on a special leave from the ADB, during which she was a Deputy Director of an independent private economic think tank in Kazakhstan, the RAKURS Center for Economic Analysis. More recently, she led the preparations of ADB's Country Partnership Strategies for several Central Asian and South Caucasus countries and was involved in the Department's analytical work and knowledge management.</p>

	<p>Dmitry Mariyasin Deputy Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Europe</p> <p>Prior to joining UNECE in 2021, Mr. Mariyasin was the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Armenia (since December 2018, after being Deputy Resident Representative in 2017-2018) leading a team of 120 people. From 2011 till 2016 he was the Regional Partnership Advisor and Team Leader in the UNDP's Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy covering the Europe and the CIS region, based in Istanbul. In this function, he led a team of 20 that supported UNDP's partnerships with new development donors and partners in the region, including strategic partnerships with Czech Republic, Kazakhstan, Romania, Russia and Slovak Republic.</p>
	<p>Dorothy Tembo Deputy Executive Director, ITC</p> <p>Ms. Tembo has served Deputy Executive Director of the International Trade Centre since June 2014. Prior to her roles at ITC, Ms. Tembo served as the Executive Director of the multi-donor funded Enhanced Integrated Framework Programme (EIF) at the World Trade Organization (WTO) supporting Least Developed Countries. Prior to the WTO, she held various other positions, including serving as Zambia's Chief Trade Negotiator and Director Foreign Trade in the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry, Deputy Chief of Party, USAID Zambia Trade and Investment Enhancement Project as well as Senior Advisor, USAID RAPID project in Botswana supporting the implementation of the SADC Protocol on Trade.</p>
	<p>Mr. Sébastien Dessus Manager, Global Trade and Regional Integration Unit, World Bank</p> <p>Sébastien Dessus is the manager of the Global Trade and Regional Integration Unit at the World Bank. He previously served as regional economics manager for Africa at the International Finance Corporation, and as an economist in various positions and African countries at the World Bank and at the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development. Sébastien Dessus holds a PhD in economics from Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University and has published extensively in academic journals and books on issues related to growth, trade, macroeconomic management, environment, poverty, political economy, and general equilibrium modeling.</p>



Ms. Dorothea Lazaro

Senior Regional Cooperation Specialist, Central and West Asia Department, Asian Development Bank

Ms. Lazaro oversees the implementation of the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Integrated Trade Agenda 2030 and CAREC Digital Strategy 2030 and manages the operation of the CAREC Secretariat Unit. She has published on trade and regional issues and is spearheading initiatives under the COP29 CAREC Partnership for Trade, Climate and Innovation. Her experience includes leading ADB projects on cross-border economic zone and customs services modernization and establishing the CAREC Climate and Sustainability Project Preparatory Fund. Prior to ADB, she was Economic Affairs Officer for UNESCAP and Head of the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement Unit at the ASEAN Secretariat. Her key areas of work include trade policies and agreements, customs, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and cross-border economic zones.

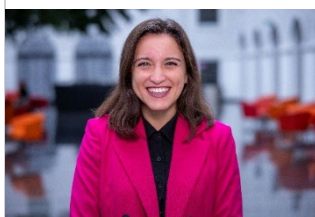


Mr. Dimitar Bratanov

Counsellor, Accessions Division, WTO

Dimitar Bratanov is currently a Counsellor in the WTO Accessions Division, responsible for the WTO accession working parties of Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Curaçao, and Serbia. He has previously worked on several other accession dossiers, including those of Algeria, Comoros, Kazakhstan, Liberia, São Tomé and Príncipe, Seychelles, Ukraine, and Tajikistan.

Between 2013 and 2016, he served as an Economic Officer at the Secretary-General's Office of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) in Geneva. He has also worked in the Economic Research and Statistics Division of the WTO (2003–2004).






Ms. Elena Bertola




Legal Affairs Officer, Trade in Services and Investment Division, WTO

Elena Bertola is a Legal Affairs Officer with the Trade in Services and Investment Division, World Trade Organization (WTO), Geneva.

She is responsible for the negotiations on domestic regulation both in the Working Party on Domestic Regulation and the Joint Initiative on Services Domestic Regulation. She also assists WTO Members on various other services related matters and regularly participates in WTO Technical Assistance activities.

She holds a Master in International Law from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies of Geneva (Switzerland, 2019). She

	<p>previously obtained her Degree in Law from the University of Turin (Italy, 2017).</p>
	<p>Ms. Stefania Gallo Digital Trade Policy Officer, Digital Trade and Emerging Technologies, WTO</p> <p>Stefania Gallo is digital trade policy officer in the Digital Trade and Emerging Technologies Hub of the World Trade Organization (WTO). There, she contributes to the work on electronic commerce through the provision of technical and substantive support to delegations, and in relevant institutional processes. She joined the WTO in 2009 and, prior to her current role, has held positions in other divisions covering the General Council and Trade Negotiations Committee, information and external relations and development issues.</p>
	<p>Mr. Nurlan Kulbatyrov Deputy General Director, QazTrade Center for Trade Policy Development, Kazakhstan</p> <p>Mr. Kulbatyrov, a national trade policy expert, graduated from the Timiryazev Russian State Agrarian University and was a Research fellow HSE University's Institute for Trade Policy. Mr. Kulbatyrov has over 15 years of research experience on economies in transition, business climate, trade policy, and trade connectivity in Central Asia. He previously headed the Entrepreneurship Development Center at the Economic Research Institute under the Ministry of National Economy, where he co-authored Kazakhstan's Business Climate Barometer report. He is an active member of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor national team based at Nazarbayev University, has completed professional training in South Korea, Japan, Turkey, and China, and serves as an expert for the Government of Kazakhstan's Industry Change Management Program. Mr. Kulbatyrov supervised Kazakhstan's OECD Country Programme.</p>
	<p>Adam Jakubik Economist, IMF</p> <p>Adam Jakubik is an Economist working on trade policy issues in the Strategy, Policy and Review Department at the International Monetary Fund. Previously he has worked in the Economic Research and Statistics Division at the World Trade Organization (2016-20) on research, policy publications such as the World Trade Report, and as economic advisor to several WTO dispute settlement proceedings concerning subsidies, countervailing (anti-subsidy) duties, and anti-dumping. He holds a PhD in economics from the European University Institute, and master's and bachelor's degrees in economics from University College London. He has published on WTO issues, the labor market</p>

	effects of trade, services, and global value chains, among others, in the Journal of Economic Geography and the European Economic Review.
	<p>Ms. Rupa Chanda Director, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, UNESCAP</p> <p>Ms. Rupa Chanda is the Director of Trade, Investment and Innovation. Prior to that, she was a Professor of Economics at IIM Bangalore and the Dean of Programmes at the institute. She has worked as an Economist at the IMF and briefly served as Head, UNESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia in New Delhi. Prof. Chanda received her PhD in Economics from Columbia University and her Bachelor's from Harvard University. She teaches Macroeconomics and International Trade and has received teaching awards. Her research interests include the WTO, trade in services, regional integration and migration. She has undertaken research and professional assignments for international and Indian organizations and has published extensively in the form of books, journal articles, book chapters, and reports. She is active professionally as a research guide, reviewer, and member of several expert committees. She was member of the WHO's Review Committee on the functioning of the International Health Regulations (2015-16) and the WHO's Expert Advisory Group, International Recruitment of Health Personnel (2019-20).</p>
	<p>Mr. Baasankhuu Purev Deputy Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the WTO</p> <p>Baasankhuu Purev serves as the Deputy Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, including the WTO. In this role, he represents Mongolia on international matters, engaging with organizations like the WTO to promote and protect the nation's interests in global trade. He acts as a delegate for Mongolia at the WTO and other bodies, participating in meetings and negotiations. For trade policy, he contributes to discussions on strengthening Mongolia's participation in multilateral trade negotiations and addressing challenges faced by developing countries.</p>
	<p>Nurbek Maksutov Head of Representative Office of the Ministry of Economy and Commerce on WTO Issues, Kyrgyz Republic</p> <p>Mr. Maksutov is a Geneva-based experienced trade diplomat and trade facilitation expert with a demonstrated history of working in international trade and investment policy formulation areas. Mr. Maksutov since 2017 till present has been working as a country delegate of the Kyrgyz Republic to the WTO and is skilled in trade negotiations, interpretation of GATT and GATS</p>

	<p>Articles of the WTO, as well as deep operational-level engagement with the economics and development institution of the UN system. He is currently a part of two important UNECE Bodies, as a Vice-Chair of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity of Standards (since June 2023) and Vice-Chair of the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) since November 2023. He holds Master of Science in Economics at the University of Geneva and Master of Business Administration at the Yokohama National University.</p>
	<p>Mr. Inoyatullo Qosimzoda Advisor to the Office of Assistant to the President of the Republic of Tajikistan on Economic Issues</p> <p>Mr. Qosimzoda Inoyatullo is an experienced economist with over 18 years of service in government, international trade policy, and multilateral cooperation. His expertise spans WTO processes, macroeconomic analysis, and agro-industrial development. Throughout his career, he has represented Tajikistan in international negotiations and contributed to advancing national economic reform agendas. Prior to his current role in the Executive Office of the President, Mr. Qosimzoda served as Counselor on WTO Affairs at the Embassy of Tajikistan to Switzerland and previously led the WTO Cooperation Department at the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. He also gained valuable experience at the World Trade Organization Secretariat in Geneva. Mr. Qosimzoda combines technical economic insight with diplomatic acumen to promote Tajikistan's integration into the global economy.</p>
	<p>Mr. Batyr Shirmedov Acting Director, International Finance Department State Bank for Foreign Economic Affairs of Turkmenistan</p> <p>Mr. Batyr Shirmedov is the Acting Director of the International Finance Department of the State Bank for Foreign Economic Affairs of Turkmenistan (TFEB). Mr. Shirmedov is responsible for developing cooperation with Multilateral Development Banks; foreign borrowings (commercial banks, ECAs, International Financial Institutions, Funds for Development); development of correspondent relations with Foreign Commercial Banks; trade finance and documentary business, cross-bordering payments and money transfers, treasury operations. Mr. Shirmedov has 28 years of experience working in the banking system of Turkmenistan. Before joining TFEB in 1998, he has worked for 2 years at the Central Bank of Turkmenistan.</p>



Mr. Luca Castellani

Legal Officer, Secretariat of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL)




Luca Castellani is a legal officer in the Secretariat of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL). He joined the Office of Legal Affairs of the secretariat of the United Nations in 2001 and the UNCITRAL secretariat in 2004, where he works in the areas of international sales and of electronic commerce. As secretary of UNCITRAL Working Group IV (Electronic Commerce), he oversaw the preparation of the UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records and of the UNCITRAL Model Law on the Use and Cross-border Recognition of Identity Management and Trust Services. He has assisted several countries in the enactment of UNCITRAL texts on electronic commerce. He is also active in the field of paperless trade facilitation and has contributed to drafting the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific. In the field of sales law, he actively promotes participation in the UN Convention on Contracts for International Sale of Goods (CISG) and has coordinated the preparation of the UNCITRAL – HCCH – Unidroit Legal Guide to Uniform Instruments in the Area of International Commercial Contracts, with a Focus on Sales. He has published several articles on international business transactions law and comparative law, namely sale of goods, electronic commerce and trade law reform in developing countries.



Ms. Céleste Laporte Talamon

Policy Analyst, Eurasia Division, OECD

Céleste Laporte Talamon is a Policy Analyst in the OECD's Global Relations and Cooperation Directorate, in the Eurasia Division, Central Asia Unit of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. In this role, she is supporting Central Asia governments advance private sector development and transport connectivity. In February 2024, she presented findings on Kazakhstan's legal environment for business, emphasizing the need for regulatory stability and improvements to contract enforcement. She has identified crucial reform areas for various Central Asian countries based on reports such as the *Legal Environment for Business and Investment in Central Asia*. Previous experience includes working at the French public investment bank Bpifrance and a posting as the economic attaché of the French embassy in Uzbekistan.

	<p>Ms. Dinara Dairabayeva National Coordinator, Regional Project "Trade Facilitation in Central Asia", Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH</p> <p>Dinara Dairabayeva is a trade policy expert with over 14 years of professional experience in customs administration and international development cooperation. She currently serves as the National Project Coordinator for the GIZ regional project "Trade Facilitation in Central Asia," where she leads the implementation of initiatives aimed at simplifying and digitalizing trade procedures in line with international standards, including the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. Dinara has been working with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) for more than 8 years, contributing to regional programs focused on trade facilitation, capacity building, and policy dialogue in Central Asia. Prior to joining GIZ, she worked for over 6 years in the Government of Kazakhstan in the customs authorities, gaining deep expertise in border management, risk management and international trade compliance.</p>
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