

WTI Global Economic Governance Seminar Series

Matthew Wilson, Chief of Staff and Chief Adviser to the Executive Director, International Trade Centre (ITC).

Small is Beautiful: What does the current special and differential treatment discussion mean for small states?

Wednesday, 3 April 2019

15.00-17.00

Silva Casa Auditorium, World Trade Institute, University of Bern
Hallerstrasse 6, 3012 Bern, Switzerland

[More Info](#) 

Brief description

Of the 164 Members of the WTO, 13 of them have populations less than 100,000 people and 22 of the smallest WTO members have less than 8 million people in total. The group of Small, Vulnerable Economies (SVEs) in the negotiations have been de facto defined as members which in the period 1999 to 2004 had an average share of world merchandise trade of no more than 0.16% , of world trade in non-agricultural products of no more than 0.1% and world trade in agriculture products of no more than 0.4%.

With these figures, can small states really have an influence in the global trade negotiations? Can they ever be rule makers rather than rule takers? Do traditional forms of special and differential treatment (S&DT) work for these small economies or does the current debate on reforming S&DT in the WTO open some opportunities for a more modern approach to flexibilities? Can the Trade Facilitation Agreement approach to S&DT be replicated?

At a time when the multilateral trading system is in crisis and geo-politics is stalling meaningful movement in the negotiations, it is useful to examine whether the recent discussions on reformulating S&DT can play a role in refocusing the development agenda and supporting a strengthened multilateralism.

Matthew Wilson, a former WTO Trade negotiator for Barbados and the Group of SVEs, will draw on his experiences in the WTO including as the first 'Friend of the Chair' leading on the development component of the Trade Facilitation negotiations and on the work of the International Trade Centre (ITC) in focusing on 'good trade'.

Participation is free of charge. Registration is not necessary.