

Stephen de Boer, Canada's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the WTO

Strengthening and Modernizing the World Trade Organization

Wednesday, 6 March 2019

16.00-18.00

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

More Info 

For current MILE and TRAIL+ students, this seminar is worth 1.5 ECTS.

Brief description

Despite clear evidence that trade has contributed to unprecedented global prosperity and development, the rules and institutions that facilitate trade seem increasingly fragile. The structural transformation of the global economy, combined with technological change, has disrupted national economies and societies. The resulting insecurity and inequality have led to growing concern that the benefits of trade have not been shared fairly and that the existing rules no longer reflect a fair balance of rights and obligations. These pressures exacerbate existing differences among Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in their need, capacity or willingness to take on new commitments. This combination of disruption and paralysis has begun to erode respect for rules-based trade, and the institutions that govern it, paving the way for trade-distorting policies.

In this context, action to restore confidence in the multilateral trading system and discourage protectionist measures and counter-measures will require leadership, creativity and patience. For this reason, Canada is working with an alliance of Members to engage in a deliberate and transparent process to develop a progressively broader consensus on how to strengthen the WTO and modernize the trade rules. Canada's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the World Trade Organization Stephen de Boer will discuss the current state of WTO reform and a number of pragmatic and realistic actions which Canada believes can modernize and strengthen the WTO.

Biography of the Speaker

Mr. de Boer joined Global Affairs Canada in 2005 and has held various positions in the department, including in the Investment Trade Policy and North America Trade Policy Divisions. In 2006, he was named the Director of the Softwood Lumber Division. From 2008 to 2010, he served as the Director of the Oceans and Environmental Law Division and as Lead Counsel for Canada's international climate change negotiations. In 2010, he joined Environment Canada as the Deputy Chief Negotiator for climate change and the Director General responsible for Canada's international climate change negotiations and partnerships. Mr. de Boer returned to the department in 2013 as the Director General of the Trade Controls Bureau. In 2015, he was appointed Ambassador to Poland and in 2016, Ambassador to Belarus. Prior to joining the public service, he worked for the Government of Ontario.

Mr. de Boer has published and lectured on international trade and environmental issues including at the Faculty of Law at Western University, Ryerson University, and at the School of Law at Case Western Reserve University. He is also a member of the Advisory Board of the Canada-U.S. Law Institute. Mr. de Boer has a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws from Western University and a Master of Laws in International and Comparative Law from Georgetown University.

Participation is free of charge. Registration is not necessary.