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2021 World Trade Forum

CHINA & THE WTO: 20 YEARS ON

(book track sessions)

November 2021, World Trade Institute, Bern, Switzerland

Call for Proposals

Dear colleagues,

We invite your submissions of proposals for contributions to a volume on *China & the WTO: 20 Years On* (World Trade Forum Series, Cambridge University Press) co-edited by **Henry Gao** (Singapore Management University), **Damian Raess** (World Trade Institute, University of Bern) & **Ka Zeng** (University of Arkansas).

Selected authors will be invited to present draft papers at the book track sessions of the 2021 World Trade Forum to be hosted at the World Trade Institute in Bern (tentatively scheduled for November 10-13). We currently envision a hybrid event, with both in-person and virtual participation options for session organizers and attendees, but are prepared to transition to a fully virtual event if conditions require. Funding is available to cover the travel and accommodation expenses for selected participants, particularly but not limited to post-docs and junior faculty. Please submit proposals of up to 500 words along with a CV via the following link <https://fs23.formsite.com/mf8wiF/ccnjys8uus/index.html> by April 30, 2021. Decisions will be sent out within a month of the submission deadline at the latest.

The year 2021 marks the 20th anniversary of China's accession to the World Trade Organization (2001), an event that has brought about the unprecedented integration of a large transitional economy into the rules-based multilateral trading system. Since its entry, China has benefited significantly from enhanced trade flows made possible by its WTO membership, becoming the largest trader in goods and second largest trader in services in the world today.

China's growing participation in the WTO and other international economic institutions has led to what some scholars call a "two-way" socialization between China and these organizations. On the one hand, China has been bound by WTO rules and has been brought more frequently to the WTO dispute settlement system than any other WTO members in the last two decades. On the other hand, however, China's WTO membership has also presented unparalleled challenges to the multilateral trade institution due to both the size of its economy and its unique economic model. Furthermore, China has sought to bring changes to the organization from within both by submitting various proposals to the WTO secretariat and at ministerial meetings and through coalition-building within the Doha round negotiations. The economic ascent of China has led to power shifts within the WTO, which some argue have contributed to the crisis and relative decline of the organization.

Outside of formal international economic institutions, China has actively promoted bilateral investment treaties (BITs) and, more recently, preferential trade agreements (PTAs) that assure preferential market

access for Chinese goods, services, and capital, while its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is increasingly subsuming much of China's economic (and political) involvement abroad. While these developments have accelerated China's economic rise, transforming the country into the workshop of the world and unleashing a global buying spree by Chinese firms, they have at the same time provoked strong backlash against Chinese influence. The ongoing U.S.-China trade war, which has completed its third full year and still has no end in sight under the new U.S. administration of President Joe Biden, further speaks to the potential for long-term strategic rivalry between the two largest economies in the world in the years to come.

Overall, progress in China's long-term integration into the global economy as well as medium-term disruptions provide excellent opportunities to take stock of the implications of China's economic rise. In particular, they raise important questions regarding the evolution of global economic governance structures, on the one hand, and government responses and policy adjustments (whether domestic or foreign policy related) in countries that are engaging China economically, on the other. Within these two main lines of enquiry, we are particularly interested in contributions that address the following issues from legal, economic, or political science/international relations perspectives. Recognizing the broad scope of the subject, we are also willing to consider other contributions within the broad scope of the subject of "China and the WTO".

A) International trade/economic governance

- 1) China's implementation of its WTO accession commitments;
- 2) China's involvement in WTO negotiations, especially the current round of plurilateral joint statement initiatives such as the ones on e-commerce and investment facilitation, etc.;
- 3) China's role in WTO reform;
- 4) China's participation in the WTO dispute settlement system;
- 5) China's Belt and Road Initiative;
- 6) China's free trade agreements including both bilateral ones and regional ones such as the RCEP;
- 7) China's bilateral investment treaties, and its participation in investor-state arbitration;
- 8) China-sponsored international institutions, such as the AIIB, etc.;

In this area of inquiry, we welcome contributions that include insights into the relationship between domestic politics and China's role in global economic governance as well as the two-way (or dynamic) relationships between the two.

B) Host government responses/policy adjustments

- 9) The responses of major WTO Members such as the US, EU, Japan, and Canada, etc., including shifts in economic policy, legal rules, and political coalition-building, etc.;
- 10) The responses of developing countries, especially those within the BRI region, including shifts in economic policy, legal rules, and political coalition-building, etc.;
- 11) The impact of Chinese trade and investment on sustainable development in host countries, including the design and impact of the "green BRI";
- 12) The politics, economics, and legal analysis of the China-US trade war;
- 13) Collective responses by countries at the regional level, such as the CPTPP;
- 14) Collective responses by countries at the global level, such as the trilateral initiative and WTO reform;

We look forward to your submissions.

Henry Gao (Law), Damian Raess (Political Science) & Ka Zeng (Political Science).