



USCIB CROSSCUTTING POLICY BRIEF

Multilateral Trade & an Effective WTO Are Vital to Sustainable Economic Recovery

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is a cornerstone of the global rules-based trading system and has helped spread growth and development for decades. Beyond the WTO, market opening efforts, for example in the form of negotiations of agreements, are vital to ensure our economic connectivity to the global marketplace.

The Administration should continue to push for WTO reform, reviving the appellate body, concluding ongoing negotiations, looking for new opportunities and resolving long-standing issues like those of developing country status. The Administration should:

- aggressively pursue the conclusion of agreements with the UK, EU, Kenya
- take steps to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)
- begin Phase 2 negotiations for deals with Japan and China

CONTEXT & BACKGROUND: WHERE USCIB BRINGS VALUE

USCIB was founded in 1945 to promote an open world trading system. Now, as the Administration is moving to re-engage multilaterally to address complex issues at the WTO and in various trade negotiations, USCIB is uniquely positioned to support these efforts through its multisectoral membership and expertise, established relationships with international organizations and its history of advocating for an effective, rules-based international trading system.

The WTO has stalled in its ability to conclude multilateral agreements. The most recent successes were the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and the expansion of the Information Technology Agreement (ITA). Current negotiations on fisheries are ongoing and are viewed as the barometer for the efficacy of the WTO. In addition, important negotiations of a digital trade agreement (JSI on E-Commerce) had a goal of conclusion by the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12) but are also still ongoing. The Appellate Body has been suspended due to the U.S. blocking the appointment of judges and encourages the Administration to work with the WTO's new Director-General, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, to address outstanding challenges in connection with the Appellate Body.

Regarding trade negotiations outside of the WTO, the Trump Administration concluded Phase 1 agreements with Japan and China and began negotiations with the UK, Kenya and the EU, though with the exception of the UK, none have progressed very far. The Trump Administration also pulled the U.S. out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which was a strategic agreement to address many issues our members are facing with China. The Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) also expires next year.

USCIB engages at the WTO in its own right, including at the annual WTO Global Forum and through the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), leveraging a global network of ICC National Committees. Through the Digital Trade Network (DTN), USCIB also engages on the WTO e-commerce negotiations. USCIB has consistently remained a strong advocate for global implementation of both the TFA and the Information Technology Agreement (ITA). Through the above-mentioned engagements, both direct and vis-a-vis our global network, USCIB advances U.S. business interests and ensures multilateral solutions that reflect U.S. stakeholder input at the WTO.

On U.S. trade negotiations, USCIB leverages its network at the Executive Branch, on Capitol Hill and through our partner organizations - Business at OECD (BIAC) and ICC. USCIB has provided U.S. business input on negotiations of the TPP, Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and Trade in Services Agreement (TISA), as well as more recent negotiations of the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), a U.S.-Japan agreement and those currently being negotiated with UK, Kenya and the EU. USCIB regularly provides USTR significant input on China's WTO Commitments and the production of the National Trade Estimate. Additionally, USCIB advocates for U.S. trade priorities at the OECD (through BIAC), Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), UN and B20.

GOALS:

- U.S. commitment to an aggressive trade policy that will push for market-opening agreements, as well as support for the multilateral trading system, by demonstrating leadership in WTO reform efforts and negotiations.
- U.S. commitment to support U.S. business on issues like digital trade, investment, etc.

USCIB ENCOURAGES THE ADMINISTRATION TO:

- Conclude WTO E-Commerce negotiations
- Reform the Appellate Body, and allow it to resume its operations
- Conclude U.S.-UK FTA (as well as U.S.-Kenya and U.S.-EU FTAs)
- Begin Phase 2 of Japan and China FTA
- Join the CPTPP