



**ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2019 OF THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGET,
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

1.1. In accordance with the procedures for an annual overview of World Trade Organization (WTO) activities, adopted by the General Council on 15 November 1995 (WT/GC/M/8, item 11), a report on the activities of the Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration (CBFA) in 2019 is hereby submitted.

1.2. In 2019, the CBFA held several meetings and submitted six reports¹ to the General Council. The CBFA reviewed and took note of the quarterly reports on the financial and extra-budgetary situation of the Organization; regular updates on the arrears of contributions from Members and Observers; a progress report on the WTO Pension Plan; the Annual Report on Diversity in the WTO Secretariat; the 2017-2018 Report on Staff Learning Development as well as the Report of the Office of Internal Oversight for 2018-2019.

1.3. During the first General Council meeting in 2019, the Chairman of the CBFA invited the General Council to urge Members and Observers under Administrative Measures to liquidate their arrears. Furthermore, the Chairman of the CBFA read out the list of Members and Observers under Administrative Measures at every General Council meeting.

1.4. The CBFA took note of outstanding contributions from Members and Observers and invited the General Council to urge Members and Observers under Administrative Measures to liquidate their arrears.

1.5. The CBFA re-endorsed the recommendation it had approved in June 2018, regarding the 2017 WTO Audited Financial Statements and recommended that the General Council approves it.

1.6. The CBFA re-endorsed a recommendation that it had agreed to make to the General Council in June 2018, to approve the 2018 WTO Audited Financial Statements.

1.7. The CBFA reviewed the 2018 WTO Audited Financial Statements and the External Auditor's Report and recommended that the General Council approves the 2018 WTO Audited Financial Statements

1.8. The CBFA proposed that the General Council approve the transfers between budgetary sections as outlined in the 2018 WTO Financial Performance Report.

1.9. The CBFA considered a proposal for the 2018 budgetary surplus to be transferred to the Working Capital Fund and submitted a recommendation to the General Council for approval.

1.10. The CBFA had delegated the process for the selection of the next External Auditor to a Working Group. An Invitation to Bid, including selection criteria, was sent to all WTO Members in July and the assessment of bids took place in September and October.

1.11. After a competitive selection process, the CBFA made a recommendation to the Working Group that the Auditor General of France be appointed as the External Auditor of the WTO Secretariat and the WTO Pension Plan, for the period 2020-2025.

¹ WT/BFA/178 covering the meeting held on 20 March 2019; WT/BFA/179 covering the meeting of 30 April 2019, WT/BFA/180 covering the meeting of 17 June 2019, WT/BFA/181 covering the meetings of 24 September and 3 October 2019; WT/BFA/182 covering the meeting of 21 October 2019 and WT/BFA/183 covering the meetings of 12 November, 27 November and 5 December 2019.

1.12. The CBFA made a recommendation to the General Council to approve a Policy for the Management of the Working Capital Fund.

1.13. During meetings of the CBFA in 2019, Officials of the WTO Secretariat invited delegates to liaise with their authorities to consider making contributions in order to facilitate participation of LDC Members in the 12th Ministerial Conference.

1.14. The Director General addressed the CBFA on two occasions on the subject of the 2020-2021 WTO Budget.

1.15. The CBFA reviewed a request from the Staff Council to be represented during CBFA meetings. A consensus was not reached as to whether or not to respond favourably to the request from the Staff Council.

1.16. Finally, the CBFA examined and proposed to the General Council to approve the 2020-2021 Biennium budget proposals for the WTO and the International Trade Center (ITC) as well as the 2020-2021 Biennial Technical Assistance and Training Plan.
