



11 November 2021

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Page: 1/2

**ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2021 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 2021 is hereby submitted.

1.2. In 2021, the CBFA held eight formal meetings and submitted eight reports¹ to the General Council. The CBFA reviewed and took note of regular items such as the quarterly reports on the financial and extra-budgetary situation of the Organization; the 2021 WTO Salary Survey and Dependency Allowances; updates from the Chairperson of the WTO Pension Plan Management Board; the Report on the Status of the Implementation of the External Audit Recommendations; an update on the WTO Medical Insurance Plan and ASHI, the Annual Strategic Facilities Plan; the WTO Secretariat's Learning and Development Programme for 2019 and 2020; and the Report of the Office of Internal Oversight for 2020-2021.

1.3. The Director General presented the WTO 2022-2023 budget proposal to the Committee on 22 June and further shared her thoughts on strategic planning.

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. Furthermore, the Chairman of the CBFA read out the list of Members and Observers under Administrative Measures at every General Council meeting.

1.5. The CBFA adopted the procedural improvements for the Committee presented by some Members.

1.6. The CBFA continued its discussions on a number of Financial Regulations, including those related to trust funds and the enabling continuation of operations pending the approval of the budget.

1.7. The CBFA took note of the Reports of the Office of Internal Oversight on the status of the implementation of the Internal Audit Recommendations.

1.8. The CBFA reviewed the 2020 WTO Audited Financial Statements and the External Auditor's Report and recommended that the General Council approve the 2020 WTO Audited Financial Statements. In addition, the CBFA proposed that the General Council approve transfers between budgetary sections as outlined in the 2020 WTO Financial Performance Report.

1.9. The CBFA reviewed and took note of the performance audit on the WTO's management of the COVID-19 crisis and its consequences. The conclusions, as prepared by the External Auditors, were favourable.

¹ WT/BFA/193 covering the meeting held on 8 March 2021; WT/BFA/194 covering the meeting of 19 April 2021, WT/BFA/195 covering the meeting of 25 May 2021, WT/BFA/196 covering the meeting of 22 June and 1 July 2021; WT/BFA/197 covering the meeting of 12 July 2021, WT/BFA/198 and WT/BFA/198/Corr.1 covering the meeting of 23 September 2021; WT/BFA/199 covering the meeting of 22 October 2021, and WT/BFA/200 covering the meeting of 4 November 2021.

1.10. The CBFA took note of a briefing note from ITC which gave information on ITC's contribution to WTO objectives.

1.11. During meetings of the CBFA in 2021, Officials of the WTO Secretariat invited delegates to liaise with their authorities to consider making contributions in order to facilitate the participation of LDC Members in the 12th Ministerial Conference. Several Members contributed to the Fund and available funds can cover the relevant costs.

1.12. A Working Group on Coherence in the Establishment and Management of WTO Trust Funds met several times to draft some recommendations to be presented to the CBFA in the context of Management of the WTO Trust Funds. Discussions are still ongoing.

1.13. The CBFA submitted a recommendation to the General Council to approve the utilization of the 2020 budgetary surplus as follows: part of it to be applied against Members' contributions for 2022; and part to be transferred to the Working Capital Fund.

1.14. Finally, the CBFA examined and proposed to the General Council to approve the 2022-2023 Biennium budget proposals for the WTO and the International Trade Center (ITC) as well as the budgetary aspects of the 2022-2023 Biennial Technical Assistance and Training Plan.
