



Committee on Regional Trade Agreements

**DRAFT REPORT (2022) OF THE
COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS
TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL**

CHAIRMEN: DR. CLEOPA KILONZO MAILU (KENYA) AND
MR TAEHO LEE (REPUBLIC OF KOREA)

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Committee on Regional Trade Agreements (CRTA) pursued its activities with meetings held in person with a virtual add on through the Interpretfy platform. At its first meeting in March 2022, the CRTA elected, by acclamation, Ambassador TaeHo LEE (Republic of Korea), as Chairman of the CRTA.

1.2. During 2022, the Committee held four sessions (in March, June, September and November). The minutes of those meetings are listed in the Attachment.

2 OBSERVER STATUS

2.1. No decision was taken with respect to the requests for observer status listed in document WT/REG/W/11/Add.4/Rev.2.

3 EARLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

3.1. In the period 16 October 2021 to 15 October 2022, no early announcements were received from Members.

4 NOTIFICATIONS

4.1. In the period 16 October 2021 to 15 October 2022, the CRTA received 16 notifications of new regional trade agreements (RTAs), seven on trade in goods notified under Article XXIV of GATT 1994, and nine on trade in services notified under Article V of GATS.¹ The CRTA also received additional notifications concerning six RTAs already notified.²

4.2. In an effort to encourage the notification of non-notified RTAs, the Chairmen with the help of the Secretariat continued to draw up and circulate in advance of CRTA meetings a list of non-notified RTAs which have been verified by their parties as being in force and appeared in factual presentations.³ The most recent list, circulated in September 2022, contains 62 RTAs. **[to be updated upon the circulation of WT/REG/W/172]**

¹ Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) – Serbia; United Kingdom – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; Türkiye – Kosovo* (*reference to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)); Türkiye – Serbia; EFTA – Türkiye; Republic of Korea – Türkiye; EFTA – Ecuador; EFTA – Indonesia; Southern African Development Community (SADC); India – United Arab Emirates; EFTA – Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

² Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations Plus (PACER Plus); Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP); United Kingdom, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru; United Kingdom – Colombia; EFTA – Türkiye; and Nicaragua – Chinese Taipei.

³ Documents WT/REG/W/165, WT/REG/W/167, WT/REG/W/169 and WT/REG/W/172 (to be issued).

5 CONSIDERATION OF REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS

5.1. In the period 16 October 2021 to 15 October 2022, 18 factual presentations were distributed, all of which were used as the basis for consideration of RTAs in the CRTA in 2022 (see Attachment).

5.2. In an effort to unblock the backlog in the receipt of delayed data and comments, the Chairman consulted with few delegations. At the Committee's 104th Session, noting the lack of response from delegations regarding his request from consultations, the Chairman encouraged Parties to collectively improve transparency in RTAs by attending these consultations and providing the missing information as soon as possible. The Chairman with the help of the Secretariat drew up and circulated in advance of CRTA meetings a list of such RTAs.⁴

5.3. Although considerable progress has been made in the preparation of factual presentations, the Committee continues to experience some difficulties in adhering to its work programme. This is due to a number of factors: delays in the receipt of statistical data from parties, data discrepancies in Members' submissions, and delays in the receipt of comments from parties.

5.4. The Committee was informed at its 104th Session that the RTA Section would be organizing a series of webinars entitled "RTA Data Dialogues", aimed at technical officials handling RTA data submissions. The Chairman requested Members to encourage their capital-based colleagues to participate in these dialogues.

6 SUBSEQUENT NOTIFICATION AND REPORTING

6.1. In the period 16 October 2021 to 15 October 2022, three notifications of changes were received and posted on the RTA Database.⁵

6.2. The Secretariat circulated a list of RTAs subject to end of implementation (EOI) reports as of 31 January 2022 (document WT/REG/W/164). EOI reports were due for 180 RTAs, and the EOI for 14 RTAs was in 2022. The EOI for 125 RTAs is from 2023 onwards, while for one RTA the EOI year is not available. No such report was submitted in the period 16 October 2021 to 15 October 2022.

7 DATABASE ON RTAS

7.1. The Secretariat continues to update the database on individual RTAs, in accordance with the requirements of the Transparency Mechanism for RTAs.

8 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

8.1. [At the 105th Session of the Committee, the Secretariat gave an account of the RTA-related technical assistance activities it had undertaken in 2022 and those planned for 2023.]

9 PROCEDURES TO IMPROVE AND FACILITATE THE EXAMINATION PROCESS

9.1. No discussion took place on this item.

10 MC12 OUTCOME AND WTO REFORM

10.1. At the 104th Session of the Committee, the Chairman encouraged Members to consider what could be improved in the context of the CRTA as part of the WTO reform efforts. He indicated his availability to any discussions or initiatives Members may find appropriate.

⁴ Documents WT/REG/W/166, WT/REG/W/168/Rev.1, WT/REG/W/170 and WT/REG/W/173 (to be issued).

⁵ ASEAN - China; Pakistan - China and Türkiye - Serbia.

ATTACHMENT**MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD IN 2022**102nd Session – 28 March 2022

WT/REG/M/102

WT/REG434/M/1 United Kingdom - Türkiye, goods

WT/REG432/M/1 United Kingdom - Singapore, goods and services

WT/REG442/M/1 China - Mauritius, goods and services

103rd Session – 27 June 2022

WT/REG/M/103

WT/REG444/M/1 Ukraine - Israel, goods⁶

WT/REG450/M/1 Namibia - Zimbabwe, goods

WT/REG423/M/1/Rev.1 United Kingdom - Chile, goods and services

WT/REG419/M/1 United Kingdom - Canada, goods and services

WT/REG453/M/1 United Kingdom - Jordan, goods

WT/REG332/M/1 European Union – Central America (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama), goods and services

104th Session – 22 September 2022

WT/REG/M/104

WT/REG460/M/1 Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) - Singapore, services

WT/REG437/M/1 United Kingdom - Switzerland, goods

WT/REG433/M/1 United Kingdom - Tunisia, goods

WT/REG431/M/1 United Kingdom – Republic of Korea, goods and services

WT/REG452/M/1 Republic of Korea – Central America (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama), goods and services

105th Session – 14 November 2022 (to be issued)

WT/REG/M/105

WT/REG/W/171 Draft Report (2022) of the CRTA to the General Council

WT/REG339/M/2 Republic of Korea – Türkiye, services

WT/REG417/M/1 United Kingdom - Kenya, goods

⁶ The factual presentation was distributed in the period 16 October 2020 to 15 October 2021.

WT/REG428/M/1	United Kingdom - Israel, goods
WT/REG426/M/1	United Kingdom - Egypt, goods
WT/REG456/M/1	United Kingdom - Mexico, goods
