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# CONFERENCE BOOKLET



## RIS

Research and Information System  
for Developing Countries

विकासशील देशों की अनुसंधान एवं सूचना प्रणाली





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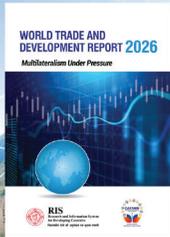


**RIS**  
Research and Information System  
for Developing Countries  
विश्वविद्यालय दिल्ली की अग्रणीय एवं सूचना प्रणाली



**International Conference**  
**Multilateralism Under Pressure**  
*Roadmap to the WTO Ministerial Conference*

**Saturday, 21 March 2026 | 9.00 am (IST) onwards**  
**Mansingh I & II, Taj Mahal, Man Singh Road, New Delhi**



**Launch of the World  
Trade and Development  
Report 2026**

# Agenda

Time	Session / Theme
10:00 – 11:00 AM	<b>Inaugural Session and Report Launch</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Welcome Remarks: Prof. Sachin Kumar Sharma</b>, Director General, RIS, New Delhi</li><li>• <b>Initial Remarks: Ambassador Jayant Dasgupta</b>, Member, RIS Governing Council and General Body, and Former Ambassador to the WTO</li></ul> <p><b>Special Address:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Ambassador Sudhakar Dalela</b>, Secretary (ER), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India</li><li>• <b>Mr. Amitabh Kumar</b>, Additional Secretary, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India</li><li>• <b>Dr. Senthil Pandian C.</b>, Ambassador &amp; Permanent Representative of India to the WTO, Permanent Mission of India to the WTO (Online)</li></ul> <p><b>Keynote Address:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Dr. Arvind Virmani</b>, Member, NITI Aayog, New Delhi</li></ul> <p><i>Launch of World Trade and Development Report 2026</i></p> <p><i>Vote of Thanks: Dr. Prabir De, Professor, RIS</i></p>
11:00 – 11:30 AM	<b>Tea / Coffee Break</b>

Session coordinator:  
Dr. Prabir De

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**11:30 AM – 1:00 PM Session I: Broader Issues at 14th WTO  
Ministerial Conference**

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- **Chair: Mr. Rajeev Kher**, Distinguished Fellow, RIS, New Delhi

**Panellists:** [8 minutes each]

- **Prof. S. K. Mohanty**, Distinguished Fellow, RIS, New Delhi  
*The Changing Global Landscape of Trade and Investment*
- **Dr. Harsha Vardhana Singh**, Chairman, IKDHVAJ Advisors LLP, New Delhi  
*WTO Reform for an Inclusive Multilateral Trading System*
- **Dr. Atul Kaushik**, GDC Fellow, RIS, New Delhi  
*WTO Dispute Settlement Reform*
- **Mr. Abhijit Das**, International Trade Expert  
*Special and Differential Treatment Provisions*
- **Ms. R. V. Anuradha**, Co-Founder & Partner, Clarus Law Associates, New Delhi  
*Trade and Sustainability at the WTO*
- **Prof. Shailja Singh**, Professor of Practice and Senior Fellow, Jindal Global Law School, Sonapat  
*Joint Statement Initiatives at the WTO*

Session Coordinator:  
Dr. Sabyasachi Saha

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**1:00 – 2:00 PM Lunch**

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**2:00 – 3:30 PM Session II: Specific Issues at the 14th WTO  
Ministerial Conference**

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- **Chair: Ambassador J. S. Deepak**, Former PR of India to the WTO

**Panellists:** [8 minutes each]

- **Prof. Sachin Kumar Sharma**, Director General, RIS  
*WTO Agriculture Negotiations Ahead of MC14*

Session Coordinator:  
Dr. Sushil Kumar

- **Dr. Suvayan Neogi**, Consultant (Economics),  
Centre for WTO Studies, New Delhi  
*Public Stockholding for Food Security*
- **Mr. Mukesh Bhatnagar**, Former Professor,  
Centre for WTO Studies, New Delhi (Online)  
*WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies*
- **Mr. Anwar Hussain Shaik**, Former Chairperson,  
WTO-TBT Committee (Online)  
*Investment Facilitation in the Global Trading System*
- **Mr. G.D. Lohani**, Former Minister (Customs),  
India's PMI to the WTO (Online)  
*WTO-Customs Duty Moratorium on Electronic  
Transmissions*
- **Dr. Pritam Banerjee**, Head, Centre for WTO  
Studies, New Delhi  
*Industrial Policy, Subsidies and Inclusivity*

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**3:30 – 4:00 PM Tea Break**

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**4:00 – 5:00 PM Session III: Negotiating Strategies at the WTO:  
Lessons from the Past**

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Session Coordinator:  
Dr. Pankaj Vashisht

- **Chair: Ms. Sindhushree Khullar**, Member,  
Research Advisory Council of RIS, New Delhi

**Panellists:**

- **Mr. Abhijit Das**, International Trade Expert,  
New Delhi  
Author of *Strategies in GATT and WTO  
Negotiations*
- **Dr. Amrita Narlikar**, Distinguished Fellow, ORF  
Author of *Poverty Narratives and Power Paradoxes  
in International Trade Negotiations and Beyond*
- **Dr. Harsha Vardhana Singh**, Chairman,  
IKDHVAJ Advisors LLP, New Delhi
- **Prof. Prabhash Ranjan**, Professor and Vice Dean  
(Research), Jindal Global Law School, Sonipat

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**5:00– 6:30 PM Special Session on Agricultural Trade in a  
Fragmenting World: Food Security, Subsidies, and  
Sustainability**

*In collaboration with Delhi School of Economics (DSE)*

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- **Chair: Ambassador Jayant Dasgupta**, Member, RIS Governing Council and General Body

**Panellists:** [8 minutes each]

- **Dr. Edwini Kessie**, Director, Agriculture and Commodities Division, WTO, Geneva (Online)
- **Dr. Ashwani Mahajan**, Economist & National Co-convener, Swadeshi Jagran Manch
- **Ms. Vahini Naidu**, Programme Coordinator of the Trade for Development Programme (TDP), the South Centre, Geneva (Online)
- **Dr. Pratap Singh Birthal**, Former Director, National Institute of Agricultural Economics and Policy Research (NIAP), New Delhi.
- **Mr. Aditya Sesh**, Founder & Managing Director, Basiz Fund Services Pvt. Ltd.
- **Ms. Ranja Sengupta**, Senior Researcher, Third World Network India

Session Coordinators:  
Dr. Pankhuri Gaur &  
Ms. Paavni Mathur

Open Discussion: Q&A

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**6:30 – 7:00 PM**

**Valedictory Session**

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- **Chair: Dr. Seshadri Chari**, Member, Governing Council and General Body, RIS

**Way Forward for MC 14: Mr. Yashvir Singh**, Economic Advisor, Department of Commerce, Government of India, New Delhi

Session Coordinator:  
Dr. Amit Kumar

**Remarks:**

- **Prof. Ram Singh**, Director, Delhi School of Economics, New Delhi
- **Prof. Sharad Kumar Soni**, Associate Dean, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi
  
- **Closing Remarks by Prof. Sachin Kumar Sharma**, Director General, RIS, New Delhi

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**7:00 PM onwards**

**Dinner**

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# Concept Note

The banner features the logos of RIS (Research and Information System for Developing Countries) and DAKSHIN (South Asian Centre for Economic Research and Information Systems) at the top. The main title is "International Conference Multilateralism Under Pressure: Roadmap to the WTO Ministerial Conference". The event is scheduled for Saturday, 21 March 2026, at 9.00 am (IST) onwards, at Mansingh I & II, Taj Mahal, Man Singh Road, New Delhi. A central image shows a globe with a network of white lines connecting various points. In the bottom left, there is a book cover for "WORLD TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2026: Multilateralism Under Pressure" with the RIS logo. In the bottom right, it says "Launch of the World Trade and Development Report 2026".

Established over four decades ago, the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) is a New Delhi-based think tank pursuing evidence-based research in trade, investment, finance, technology and development cooperation. The institution has a long and distinguished track record of producing rigorous, policy-relevant research on trade and development issues, with a particular focus on the concerns and interests of developing countries and the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

The multilateral trading system is under immense pressure. Challenges ranging from conflicts and pandemics to climate change and geopolitical contestations have already unhinged a global order in place since the mid-twentieth century. Recent disruptions arising from unilateral reciprocal tariffs and muscular industrial policy actions have made it even more difficult for investors and businesses to fathom opportunities in an uncertain

landscape. They need the multilateral trading order to return to a secure and predictable environment and are looking to their governments to craft it. With the negotiation function of the World Trade Organization (WTO) almost stalled and its dispute settlement mechanism dysfunctional, WTO Member countries find themselves in throes of introspection. Reaffirming their commitment to work towards necessary reforms of the WTO to improve all its functions, taking some operational decisions, and adding two new members, the Ministers at the 13th Ministerial Conference held out some promise of action in the near future. They will be meeting again at the 14th Ministerial Conference (MC14) in Yaoundé, Cameroon, during 26–29 March 2026. The MC14 arrives at a moment of singular consequence for the multilateral trading system. The outcome of this Conference will shape the trajectory of global trade governance for years to come.

True to its tradition of producing timely flagship reports ahead of major international trade events, RIS is proud to present the World Trade and Development Report 2026 (WTDR 2026), a comprehensive analytical contribution prepared in the run-up to MC14. The last World Trade and Development Report of RIS was published in 2021 on Trade, Technology and Institutions, focusing on WTO@25: The Way Forward. Not much has changed in the architecture of the multilateral trading system since then, but the urgency of retrieving the system from the current abyss cannot be overstated.

The Report is the product of sustained intellectual effort and broad collaborative engagement. It brings together contributions from leading experts, including trade economists, legal scholars, former negotiators, and policy practitioners, who have examined the full range of issues before the WTO with rigour and depth. The chapters cover critical subject areas including WTO reform and dispute settlement reform, food security and agriculture, fisheries subsidies, plurilateral agreements and Joint Statement Initiatives (JSIs), industrial policy and its interface with trade rules, the trade

and sustainability interface, and Special and Differential Treatment for developing countries. As part of the preparatory process for the Report, RIS organised a series of twelve roundtable discussions in January and February 2026, bringing together serving and former trade negotiators, senior policymakers, academics, and civil society experts to deliberate upon the specific issues on the MC14 agenda. These roundtables served to pool the collective wisdom and expertise of the policy and research community, generating actionable insights and strategic recommendations. The World Trade and Development Report 2026 is a culmination of these efforts, drawing upon the deliberations, research contributions, and expert inputs that emerged from this sustained process of engagement, and presenting a comprehensive body of knowledge to help India and the Global South navigate the challenges and opportunities of MC14.

An international conference including the launch of the WTDR 2026 is being organised on 21 March 2026 as a full-day event, structured to enable detailed and substantive engagement with its findings and recommendations. The programme brings together a distinguished gathering of policymakers, diplomats, trade experts, academics, and students, and is structured around an Inaugural Session, two substantive panel discussions examining the themes addressed in the Report. These panel discussions will be followed by a session on negotiating strategies at the WTO with authors of books on the subject. RIS is organising a special session with the Delhi School of Economics on Agriculture, Food Security and Subsidies. The conference will conclude with a valedictory session followed by dinner. The event seeks to foster an open and constructive dialogue that can contribute to sharpening the negotiating positions of developing countries and building a broader coalition of informed stakeholders ahead of MC14.



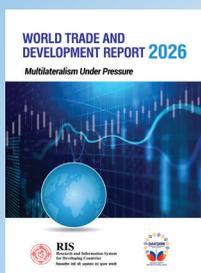
# About the WTDR 2026



**RIS**  
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## World Trade and Development Report 2026



### Chapter 1

**The Fragmenting Trade Order: What is at Stake for the WTO?**

*Sachin Kumar Sharma, Prabir De, Lakshmi Swathi Ganti, Tanya Malhotra, Alisha Goswami and Paavni Mathur*

### Chapter 2

**The Changing Global Landscape of Trade and Investment**

*S K Mohanty, Sabyasachi Saha, Pankhuri Gaur*

## Part I: Broader Issues at MC 14

### Chapter 3

**WTO Reform for an Inclusive Multilateral Trading System**

*Harsha Vardhana Singh, Atul Kaushik, Teesta Lahiri*

### Chapter 4

**WTO Dispute Settlement Reform: A Difficult Issue for 14th Ministerial Conference**

*Atul Kaushik, Renu Mann*

### Chapter 5:

**Special and Differential Treatment Provisions: Evaluating Different Approaches**

*Abhijit Das, Paavni Mathur, Sushil Kumar*

### Chapter 6

**Trade and Sustainability at the WTO: Strategic Priorities for MC14**

*RV Anuradha, Rajeev Kher, Anshuman Gupta, Lakshmi Swathi Ganti*

### Chapter 7

**Multilateralism Served a la Carte: The Rise of Joint Statement Initiatives at the WTO, Issues and Challenges**

*Shailja Singh, Priyadarshi Dash, Pragyana Agarwal*

## Part II: Specific Issues at MC 14

### Chapter 8

**The State of Play in WTO Agriculture Negotiations Ahead of MC 14**

*Sachin Kumar Sharma, Talha Akbar Kamal, Alisha Goswami, Yogeshwari Mahajan, Kamna Chaudhary*

### Chapter 9

**Public Stockholding for Food Security: The Unresolved Debate in WTO Agriculture Negotiations**

*Sachin Kumar Sharma, Suvayan Neogi, Paavni Mathur, Palkin Ratna*

### Chapter 10

**WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies: Need to Balance Equity and Sustainability in MC14**

*Mukesh Bhatnagar, Pankhuri Gaur, Ayush Tiwari*

### Chapter 11

**Investment Facilitation in the Global Trading System**

*Anwar Hussain Shaik, Pankaj Vashisht, Vaasu Aggarwal*

### Chapter 12

**WTO-Customs Duty Moratorium on Electronic Transmissions**

*G.D. Lohani, Amit Kumar, Alaknanda Mishra*

### Chapter 13

**Industrial Policy, Subsidies and Inclusivity: Levelling the Global Playing Field**

*Pritam Banerjee, Zaki Hussain, Kanika Karwal, Riddhi Lakhani*

## Notes

## Notes



**RIS**  
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RIS specialises in issues related to international economic development, trade, investment and technology. It is envisioned as a forum for fostering effective policy dialogue and capacity-building among developing countries on global and regional economic issues. The focus of the work programme of RIS is to promote South-South Cooperation and collaborate with developing countries in multilateral negotiations in various forums. Through its following centres/forums, RIS promotes policy dialogue and coherence on regional and international economic issues.



The word “DAKSHIN” (दक्षिण) is of Sanskrit origin, meaning “South.” The Hon’ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, inaugurated DAKSHIN – Global South Centre of Excellence in November 2023. The initiative was inspired by the deliberations of Global South leaders during the Voice of the Global South Summits. DAKSHIN stands for Development and Knowledge Sharing Initiative. Hosted at the RIS, DAKSHIN has established linkages with leading think tanks and universities across the Global South and is building a dynamic network of scholars working on Global South issues.



AIC at RIS has been working to strengthen India’s strategic partnership with ASEAN in its realisation of the ASEAN Community. AIC at RIS undertakes research, policy advocacy and regular networking activities with relevant organisations and think-tanks in India and ASEAN countries, with the aim of providing policy inputs, up-to-date information, data resources and sustained interaction, for strengthening ASEAN-India partnership.



CMEC has been established at RIS under the aegis of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPS&W), Government of India. CMEC is a collaboration between RIS and Indian Ports Association (IPA). It has been mandated to act as an advisory/technological arm of MoPSW to provide the analytical support on policies and their implementation.



FITM is a joint initiative by the Ministry of Ayush and RIS. It has been established with the objective of undertaking policy research on economy, intellectual property rights (IPRs) trade, sustainability and international cooperation in traditional medicines. FITM provides analytical support to the Ministry of Ayush on policy and strategy responses on emerging national and global developments.



BEF aims to serve as a dedicated platform for fostering dialogue on promoting the concept in the Indian Ocean and other regions. The forum focuses on conducting studies on the potential, prospects and challenges of blue economy; providing regular inputs to practitioners in the government and the private sectors; and promoting advocacy for its smooth adoption in national economic policies.



FIDC, has been engaged in exploring nuances of India’s development cooperation programme, keeping in view the wider perspective of South-South Cooperation in the backdrop of international development cooperation scenario. It is a tripartite initiative of the Development Partnership Administration (DPA) of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, academia and civil society organisations.



FISSD aims to harness the full potential and synergy between science and technology, diplomacy, foreign policy and development cooperation in order to meet India’s development and security needs. It is also engaged in strengthening India’s engagement with the international system and on key global issues involving science and technology.



As part of its work programme, RIS has been deeply involved in strengthening economic integration in the South Asia region. In this context, the role of the South Asia Centre for Policy Studies (SACEPS) is very important. SACEPS is a network organisation engaged in addressing regional issues of common concerns in South Asia.



Knowledge generated endogenously among the Southern partners can help in consolidation of stronger common issues at different global policy fora. The purpose of NeST is to provide a global platform for Southern Think-Tanks for collaboratively generating, systematising, consolidating and sharing knowledge on South South Cooperation approaches for international development.



DST-Satellite Centre for Policy Research on STI Diplomacy at RIS aims to advance policy research at the intersection of science, technology, innovation (STI) and diplomacy, in alignment with India’s developmental priorities and foreign policy objectives.

## — Policy research to shape the international development agenda —

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