

The debate on the reform of the International Trade Organization

What place for the African continent?

For almost 25 years, the World Trade Organization (WTO) has established itself as the key institution for the regulation of international trade exchanges. It not only embodied security, openness and transparency, but also the predictability of the trade system and played a vital role in the peaceful settlement of trade disputes between its member states.

However, the WTO seems weakened and contested nowadays. The trade negotiations are blocked, the Permanent Appellate Body is paralyzed and the multilateralism trade system is increasingly challenged by unilateralism and commercial wars. Never in the history of this Organization was the idea of a reform so clearly and enthusiastically suggested. Nonetheless, if the call for a reform seems to be almost unanimous among the members of the Organization, the suggestions regarding the content of this reform differ considerably.

In this context, the **Policy Center for the New South** is organizing an international conference in collaboration with the **Chaire de l'OMC de l'Université Mohamed V de Rabat** under the theme **"The debate of the reform of the World Trade Organization: what place for the African continent?"**.

This conference aims to contribute to the debate on the challenges, process and perspectives of the WTO's reform, with a focus on the role and place of the African continent in this reform.

The conference will hold three panels: the first one will discuss the reasons behind the current blockage of the WTO; the second one will analyze the process of this reform as well as the suggestions made by the member states; and the third one will emphasize Africa's participation in the dynamics of the reform and attempt to draw up some recommendations that could allow the African continent to take advantage of the expected reform.

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AGENDA	
09:00– 09:30	Welcoming of participants and coffee break
09:30– 09:45	Opening remarks
09:45– 11:15	Panel I : The reasons behind the current blockage of the WTO

11:15– 11:30	Coffee break
11:30– 13:00	Panel II : Analysis of the reform’s process and the suggestions made by the member states
13:00– 14:30	Lunch break
14:30– 16:00	Panel III : Africa’s place in the WTO reform debate
16:00– 16:15	Closing remarks