



GLOSSARY OF TRADE AND GENDER TERMS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Introduction	1
2	Glossary	2
	ACP Group	2
	Agriculture	2
	Aid for Trade (Aft)	2
	Autonomy	2
	Barriers to the economic activity of women	3
	Barriers to trade	3
	Benefits for gender-responsive programs in trade agreements.....	3
	Bilateral agreement.....	3
	BIT.....	3
	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)	3
	Cross-border informal trade	3
	Cross-border trade.....	4
	Customs procedures.....	4
	Disciplines.....	4
	Discrimination against girls and women	4
	Dispute settlement.....	4
	Dumping.....	4
	E-Commerce	5
	Empowerment	5
	Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF).....	5
	Fair and equitable treatment	6
	FOB.....	6
	Foreign direct investment (FDI)	6
	Free-trade agreement (FTA).....	6
	GATT	6
	Gender	6
	Gender-based discrimination	7
	Gender-based violence (GBV).....	7
	Gender gap	7
	Gender impact assessment (GIA).....	7
	Gender inequality.....	7
	Gender mainstreaming	7
	Gender pay gap	8
	Generalized System of Preferences (GSP)	8
	Global Value Chain (GVC).....	8
	Government (or Public) Procurement.....	8

Harmonized System (HS).....	8
Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender (IWG)	8
Intellectual Property	9
Investment	9
Investor-state dispute settlement mechanism (ISDS).....	9
Local content.....	9
Market access.....	9
Most favoured nation (MFN)	10
National treatment.....	10
Non-discrimination	10
Non-tariff barriers	10
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)	10
Precautionary principle	11
PTA – see FTA	11
Reservations, non-conforming measures.....	11
RTA – see FTA	11
Rules of origin	11
Safeguards.....	11
Services.....	12
Sex	12
Sex-disaggregated / gender-disaggregated data	12
Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)	12
Sexual harassment.....	12
Special and differential treatment (SDT)	13
Standards and certification.....	13
Standards related to gender	13
Subsidies	14
Sustainable trade.....	14
Tariffs.....	14
Trade/ International trade.....	14
Trade Facilitation	14
Trade Impact Assessment	15
Transparency	15
Unpaid care work.....	15
Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VVS).....	16
Women-led businesses	16
Women’s economic empowerment	16
World Trade Organization (WTO)	16
3 References	17

1 INTRODUCTION

The interface between gender and trade issues has been increasingly on the development agenda, addressed by a variety of stakeholders and within trade negotiations. In this context, there is a strong interaction between both the trade and the gender policy community, as well as gender advocates from civil society and business constituencies. This annotated glossary seeks to facilitate dialogue between these groups by clarifying gender and trade-related concepts.

The scope of the glossary includes basic terms used in trade as well as gender policies and negotiations, and are utilized by academics and other stakeholder in these fields. Several of the trade terms include notations which suggest a gender-responsive reinterpretation of these concepts.

The sources used for the explanation of the entries are glossaries by international organizations - such as the United Nations, UN Women, UNCTAD, OECD and the WTO- and publications by experts in both fields (see [References](#)).

2 GLOSSARY

ACP Group

African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. Composed of 79 countries with preferential trading relations with the European Union (EU) under the former Lomé Conventions (1975), then replaced by the Cotonou Agreement (2000).

AGRICULTURE

The WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA—1 January 1995) established a framework for agricultural trade and domestic policies with an increased market orientation in agricultural trade. The agricultural package provides for commitments in the areas of market access, domestic support and export competition. It addresses some specific concerns of developing countries including net-food importing countries and least-developed countries. It seeks to establish “a fair and market-oriented agricultural trading system” aimed at correcting distortions in agricultural trade brought about by [subsidies](#) and high trade barriers, and improving livelihoods of farmers. Many [free-trade agreements \(FTA\)](#)¹ include chapters on agriculture which partly replicate the AoA, and also establish bilateral provisions regarding market access and trade rules such as special [safeguards](#) and export [subsidies](#). Agriculture has always been controversial because of national food security concerns and divergent interests of stakeholders in developed and developing countries. Agriculture and food-security are important issues for women as producers, traders and consumers.

AID FOR TRADE (AFT)

A [WTO](#) program that supports developing and least-developed countries in building their trade capacity and in increasing their exports. It does so by addressing four key areas: trade policy and regulations, economic infrastructure, building productive capacity and trade-related adjustment. It is a multi-donor supported program which can be used to enhance women’s participation in international trade.

AUTONOMY

Capacity to make free and informed decisions, enabling people to be and act in accordance with their own aspirations and desires, given a historical context that makes those possible. Women’s autonomy is often conceptualized as having three dimensions:

- Physical autonomy (the freedom to make decisions regarding sexuality, reproduction and the right to live a life free from violence);
- Economic autonomy (right to work and earn one’s own income, distribution of paid and unpaid work between women and men); and
- Autonomy in both individual and collective decision-making (women’s participation in all branches of government, signing of [CEDAW](#) optional protocol, positioning of national machineries for advancement of women). (UNECLAC)

¹ Terms in bold have an individual entry.

BARRIERS TO THE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY OF WOMEN

There are numerous barriers that hinder the equal participation of women in economic activity, investment and trade. Women entrepreneurs (many of them SMEs) confront, on the one hand, similar barriers as their male SME counterparts, but they also encounter specific obstacles related to gender [discrimination](#) and stereotypes. Some of these barriers are regulatory and cultural (property rights, laws restricting the activity of women and other restrictions), discriminatory access to capital and market information, and unequal allocation of roles within society and the family.

BARRIERS TO TRADE

Government policies which place taxes or restrictions on international trade such as [tariffs](#), quotas and export restraints. Trade barriers can either make trade more difficult and expensive ([tariff](#) barriers) or even prevent trade completely (e.g. trade embargo). View also non-[tariff](#) barriers below.

BENEFITS FOR GENDER-RESPONSIVE PROGRAMS IN TRADE AGREEMENTS

Special or affirmative action programs which aim to benefit women need to be listed in the agreement as exceptions to the principle of non-discrimination and might, among others, entail tax incentives, awards and recognition, social security contributions for the employment of women, among others.

BILATERAL AGREEMENT

Trade agreement between two parties. Either between two countries; a country and a group of countries (e.g. CETA, between Canada and the European Union), or two groups of countries (e.g. between Mercosur and the European Union).

BIT

Bilateral investment treaty (BIT) is an agreement between two countries regarding the promotion and protection of investments made by investors from respective countries in each other's territory (UNCTAD).

CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW)

The Convention was adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly and is also known as the international bill of rights for women. Currently, over 90% of the members of the United Nations are party to the Convention, making it the second most ratified convention, following the Rights of the Child (UN Women).

CROSS-BORDER INFORMAL TRADE

Trade by small-scale unregistered traders, whether individuals or firms, usually for sale of goods (food, household items, clothing and more) in markets close to an international border, but sometimes in more distant provinces beyond.

CROSS-BORDER TRADE

Trade between adjacent countries, usually using ground transportation (i.e. goods transported by road or rail) as opposed to by sea or by air.

CUSTOMS PROCEDURES

These provide that imported goods enter into free circulation in the customs territory upon the payment of any import duties and taxes chargeable and the accomplishment of all the necessary customs formalities. They entail inspection of the health, safety and place of origin of consignments, and of persons (traders) for immigration status, as well as the application of appropriate [tariffs](#) and administrative fees for products/people.

DISCIPLINES

The [WTO](#) agreements and other international legal instruments use “disciplines” to refer to any rules governing measures contained within trade or investment-related negotiations or agreements.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST GIRLS AND WOMEN

Directly or indirectly treating girls and women differently from boys and men in a way which prevents them from enjoying their rights. Discrimination can be direct or indirect. Direct discrimination against girls and women is generally easier to recognize as the discrimination is quite obvious. For example, in some countries, women cannot legally own property; they are forbidden by law to take certain jobs; or the social customs of a community may not permit girls to go for higher education. Indirect discrimination against girls and women can be difficult to recognize. It refers to situations that may appear to be unbiased but result in unequal treatment of girls and women, for example in job requirements (UN Gender Glossary).

DISPUTE SETTLEMENT

A chapter outlining the mechanism and rules to resolve trade disputes is a core element of most trade agreement. The mechanism is triggered when one of the Parties believes that the other Party is violating a provision or a commitment it has made under the agreement. The unique State-to-State [WTO](#) dispute settlement system, which allows for trade sanctions in the case of non-compliance with WTO rules, has been a central pillar of the multilateral trading system, as it has discouraged arbitrary measures by countries. Lately, it has been in jeopardy because new appointments to the appellate body have been blocked unilaterally by a member country (Primer). In the WTO, resolving trade disputes is one of the core activities. It has one of the most active international dispute settlement bodies in the world. Since 1995, 600 disputes have been brought to the WTO and over 350 rulings have been issued.

DUMPING

Occurs when goods are exported at a price less than their normal value, generally meaning they are exported for less than they are sold in the domestic market or third-country markets, or at less than production cost. [GATT](#)'s Article 6 allows anti-dumping duties to be imposed on goods that are deemed to be dumped and causing

injury to producers of competing products in the importing country. The [WTO](#) Anti-Dumping Agreement expands Article 6 but does not regulate the actions of companies engaged in “dumping”. Its focus is on how governments can or cannot react to dumping — it disciplines anti-dumping actions (WTO). Anti-dumping actions are controversial and often perceived by third parties as non-tariff [barriers to trade](#).

Social or environmental dumping refers to goods produced abroad under lower social or environmental standards than in the destination market.

E-COMMERCE

Defined as the “production, distribution, marketing, sale or delivery of goods and [services](#) by electronic means” in the [WTO](#) Declaration on Global Electronic Commerce (1998). This established the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce aimed at periodically examining the treatment of e-commerce under the [GATT](#) 1994 legal framework. For many years there was a practice of not imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions (“moratorium”), which is being revised by many countries as e-commerce has become an important part of commercial transactions, even more so during the post-COVID 19 recovery. Trade-related aspects of electronic commerce have been negotiated plurilaterally at the WTO since 2019. Most contemporary trade agreements include a chapter about e-commerce or digital trade. E-commerce is considered less gender-biased than traditional trade in some respects and thus opens up new opportunities for women.

EMPOWERMENT

The empowerment of women and girls concerns their gaining power and control over their own lives. It involves awareness-raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources and actions to transform the structures and institutions which reinforce and perpetuate gender [discrimination](#) and inequality. This implies that to be empowered they must not only have equal capabilities (such as education and health) and equal access to resources and opportunities (such as land and employment), but they must also have the agency to use these rights, capabilities, resources and opportunities to make strategic choices and decisions, such as is provided through leadership opportunities and participation in political institutions (UN Gender Glossary).

ENHANCED INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK (EIF)

An Aid for Trade Initiative which manages a large fund that supports implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) by least-developed countries (LDCs). It is a partnership of 51 countries, 24 donors and eight partner agencies that works with governments, development organizations and civil society to assist LDCs to use trade as an engine for development. Funding comes from donor countries as part of their aid (international development or overseas development assistance) budgets (OECD/WTO 2019).

FAIR AND EQUITABLE TREATMENT

The principle of fair and equitable treatment (FET) entails that “each contracting Party shall accord fair and equitable treatment and full and constant protection and security to foreign investments in their territories. In no case shall a contracting Party accord treatment less favourable than that required by international law”. This principle complements the principle of non-discrimination (OECD 2004). Traditionally, most trade and investment agreements include FET as one of their main principles, for it allows investors to challenge any legal or regulatory changes that allegedly frustrate their “legitimate expectations”. This principle should be redefined and extended in trade and investment agreements to encompass fair and equitable treatment regarding gender.

FOB

Free-on-board cost of a product, excluding insurance and freight. CIF: Price of a product which includes cost, insurance, freight.

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT (FDI)

A category of investment which establishes a lasting interest by a resident enterprise in one economy (direct investor) in an enterprise (direct investment enterprise) that is resident in an economy other than that of the direct investor (OECD).

FREE-TRADE AGREEMENT (FTA)

Often used interchangeably with the terms preferential trade agreement (PTA) and regional trade agreement (RTA); bilateral trade agreements also fall into this class. It is an agreement between two or more countries to regulate trade in a wide range of areas. Often, the purpose is to liberalize some aspects of trade, e.g. [tariffs](#), [services](#), investment, government procurement, and regulate others, such as [rules of origin](#), [intellectual property](#) rights, e-commerce, among others. An important element of these agreements is an agreed [dispute settlement](#) mechanism to avoid unilateral and arbitrary measures. Some FTAs include chapters on standards regarding labour, the environment and sustainable development. Most recently, a few countries have also agreed to stand-alone chapters on trade and gender.

GATT

The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (1947) was a post-war agreement on the trade of goods that aimed to promote international trade by removing [tariffs](#) for the movement of products between signatories. The GATT secretariat as an international organization was superseded by the [WTO](#) in 1995. The GATT is still in effect under the WTO framework, although it was updated in 1994 and became the WTO agreement governing trade in goods.

GENDER

Refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time (World Health

Organization-WHO). This concept is often confused with the term sex, which is biologically determined.

GENDER-BASED DISCRIMINATION

Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, whether married or not, of human rights and fundamental freedoms, on a basis of equality of men and women ([CEDAW](#)). The notion applies to scenarios even where discrimination was not intended. Identical or neutral treatment of women and men might constitute discrimination against women if such treatment resulted in or had the effect of women being denied the exercise of a right because there was no recognition of the pre-existing gender-based disadvantage and inequality that women face.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

This is “an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between females and males. The nature and extent of specific types of GBV vary across cultures, countries and regions. Examples include sexual violence, including sexual exploitation/abuse and forced prostitution; domestic violence; trafficking; forced/early marriage; harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation; honour killings; and widow inheritance” (UN Gender Equality Glossary).

The [OECD](#) defines GBV as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women and girls, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life (OECD 2018).

GENDER GAP

A difference between women and men whether in social, political, intellectual, cultural, or economic attainments or attitudes (WEF). It is an indicator of gender inequality.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT (GIA)

An estimate of the different impacts (positive, negative or neutral) on gender equality of any policy, legislative measure, budget initiative or other activity (European Commission, 2009). In the case of trade, a GIA seeks to identify data about the impact on women as workers, producers, entrepreneurs, consumers and caretakers, which is relevant to establish trade and investment policies that both benefit and protect women, and will contribute to a transformative process towards gender equality.

GENDER INEQUALITY

In the economic sphere, gender inequalities are evident in three main dimensions: the allocation of unpaid work, opportunities for employment, pay and quality of jobs for paid workers, and the rights to property (Primer).

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy

for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality. (UN ECOSOC 1997).

GENDER PAY GAP

The difference between median earnings of men and women, expressed as the shortfall of women's earning relative to men's median earnings (OECD).

GENERALIZED SYSTEM OF PREFERENCES (GSP)

Programs by developed countries granting preferential [tariffs](#) to imports from developing countries.

GLOBAL VALUE CHAIN (GVC)

International production sharing, where production is broken into activities and tasks carried out in different countries. The term refers to the full range of activities (design, production, marketing, distribution and support to the final consumer, etc) that are divided among multiple firms and workers across geographic spaces to bring a product from its conception to its end use and beyond (UNIDO).

GOVERNMENT (OR PUBLIC) PROCUREMENT

Government procurement of goods and [services](#) represents a significant part of a country's domestic market and the market for foreign suppliers. Many countries have laws that limit foreign participation in the procurement market. Many [FTAs](#) include a Government Procurement chapter, where countries agree to open their public procurement market on a reciprocal basis. To date, women-led firms only have a limited participation, but with adequate promotion policies, set-asides and monetary thresholds this market could open-up opportunities for women.

The plurilateral Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) of the [WTO](#) was signed in 1996 and subsequently revised. Only 48 WTO members participate in this Agreement. It allows suppliers/producers in one country to bid for procurement tenders in other country, above certain monetary thresholds/amounts. The Agreement emphasises transparency and non-discrimination, and seeks optimal value for money in public purchasing.

HARMONIZED SYSTEM (HS)

The international nomenclature developed by the World Customs Organization, which is arranged in six-digit codes allowing all participating countries to classify traded goods on a common basis. Beyond the six-digit level, countries are free to introduce national distinctions for [tariffs](#) or other purposes (WTO).

INFORMAL WORKING GROUP ON TRADE AND GENDER (IWG)

The Group is composed of [WTO](#) members and observers seeking to intensify efforts to increase women's participation in global commerce. It was established in 2020 as the next phase of an initiative launched at the Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires

in 2017, the Joint Declaration on Trade and [Women's Economic Empowerment](#). The group aims to share best practices on removing barriers to women's participation in world trade, exchange views on how to apply a “gender lens” to the work of the WTO, review gender-related reports produced by the Secretariat, and discuss how women may benefit from the Aid for Trade initiative (WTO).

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Ownership of ideas, including literary and artistic works (protected by copyright), inventions (protected by patents), signs for distinguishing goods of an enterprise (protected by trademarks) and other elements of industrial property (WTO). The [WTO](#) Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights Agreement – TRIPS (January 1995) is a framework of rules which seeks to facilitate trade in, and resolves disputes over, intellectual property. Many bilateral trade agreements include a chapter on intellectual property rights with provisions which go beyond those agreed multilaterally in TRIPS.

INVESTMENT

The Agreement on Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMS), which entered into force in January 1995, is the core [WTO](#) measure relating to investment. It prohibits any measure applied by a member that discriminates against, or restricts significant amounts of a particular legal foreign flow of money (capital) for investment either in a new firm or production facility (direct foreign investment), or in a pre-existing firm or production facility (indirect foreign investment). Investment facilitation issues are being addressed in a plurilateral negotiation in the WTO.

INVESTOR-STATE DISPUTE SETTLEMENT MECHANISM (ISDS)

A system through which investors can sue countries for discriminatory practices. It is an instrument of public international law, contained in a number of free-trade agreements and bilateral investment treaties. Many stakeholders (such as governments and civil society) have voiced concerns about the need of reform of treaty-based ISDS.

LOCAL CONTENT

Requirement that the exporter purchase a certain amount of local materials for incorporation in the exported product. Regional content: Requirement that the exporter purchase a certain amount of regional materials for incorporation in the exported product (see [Rules of Origin](#) below).

MARKET ACCESS

A combination of multilateral rules and country-specific commitments governing the selling of products—goods and [services](#)—across international borders. It is distinct from free trade, and liberalization is subject to a range of conditions, [tariff](#) and non-[tariff](#) measures. Most trade agreements include a specific chapter on Market Access, which refers to trade in goods. Other market access commitments in areas such as [services](#), investment and government procurement, are included in the respective chapters.

MOST FAVOURED NATION (MFN)

Principle of treating other countries equally. Under the [WTO](#) agreements, countries cannot normally discriminate between their trading partners. If a concession is made to one partner (such as a lower customs duty rate for a product), this must apply to all other WTO members. Some exceptions are allowed. For example, countries can set up a free trade agreement that applies preferences among partners of the agreement or they can give developing countries special access to their markets. A country can also raise barriers against products that are considered to be traded unfairly from specific countries (WTO).

NATIONAL TREATMENT

Treating foreigners and locals equally. Imported and locally-produced goods and [services](#) should be treated equally after the foreign goods and services have entered the market. National treatment only applies once a product, service or item of intellectual property has entered the market. Therefore, charging customs duty on an import is not a violation of national treatment even if locally-produced products are not charged an equivalent tax (WTO).

NON-DISCRIMINATION

It is the main principle in trade and [investment](#) agreements and requires governments to commit to treat imports from all other countries the same in respect of taxation and product standards, and it also seeks to ensure that producers do not profit from, for example, hidden [subsidies](#). There are two important exceptions to this principle. First, the [WTO](#) allows for preferential treatment for Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs). Second, special rights and differential treatment provisions ([SDT](#)) may be awarded to developing countries and allow other members to treat them more favourably. It has traditionally applied to non-discrimination among specific firms and/or country of origin of firms and encompasses the principles of most favoured nation, national treatment and minimum standard of treatment. This principle should be extended to gender non-discrimination, regarding both firms and firm employees, and become a core principle in gender-responsive agreements. Transparency and due diligence are necessary to avoid and/or remedy discrimination.

NON-TARIFF BARRIERS

Measures other than [tariffs](#)—for example, import bans, discriminatory [rules of origin](#), state [subsidies](#)—that restrict import or export of goods and [services](#).

ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD)

An international organisation (includes 37 countries, mostly developed,) that works with governments, policy makers and citizens, to establish evidence-based international standards and find solutions to a range of social, economic and environmental challenges. From improving economic performance and creating jobs to fostering strong education and fighting international tax evasion, the OECD

provides a forum and knowledge hub for data and analysis, exchange of experiences, best-practice sharing, and advice on public policies and [international standard-setting](#).

PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE

In the [WTO](#), countries are encouraged to use international standards, guidelines and recommendations where they exist. When they do, they are unlikely to be challenged legally in a WTO dispute. However, members may use measures which result in higher standards if there is scientific justification. They can also set higher standards based on appropriate assessment of risks so long as the approach is consistent, not arbitrary. And they can to some extent apply the “precautionary principle”, a kind of “safety first” approach to deal with scientific uncertainty (WTO Glossary).

PTA – SEE FTA

RESERVATIONS, NON-CONFORMING MEASURES

A relevant component of an [FTA](#) as an instrument to maintain a Party’s policy-space regarding the liberalization commitments of the agreement. They apply mostly to the [services](#) and [investment](#) chapters of agreements negotiated with a **negative list** approach, that is they exclude certain sectors and legislation from either or all the benefits of the market access, most-favoured-nation and domestic presence clauses of the agreement. [FTAs](#) negotiated under this approach usually include two annexes: one, for existing legislation; and the second, for future legislation. In the case of the **positive list** format, all actual commitments are listed specifically and those which are not, are automatically excluded. In none of the existing agreements are there as yet gender-related reservations or exceptions.

RTA – SEE FTA

RULES OF ORIGIN

Laws, regulations and administrative procedures which determine a product’s country of origin which may facilitate or hinder trade. A decision by a customs authority on origin can determine whether a shipment falls within a quota limitation, qualifies for a [tariff](#) preference or is liable to an anti-[dumping](#) duty. These rules can vary from country to country. Trade agreements include rules of origin to determine whether a certain product qualifies for the agreement’s preferences. They may apply to reciprocal trade preferences (i.e. regional trade agreements or customs unions) or non-reciprocal trade preferences (i.e. preferences in favour of developing countries or LDCs) (WTO Glossary). There are different criteria to determine whether a product meets the mandated rules of origin: change in [tariff](#) classification, qualifying value content/regional value content, substantial transformation, or specific rules agreed on a product-by-product basis in a trade agreement.

SAFEGUARDS

Emergency actions taken to protect a specific industry from an unexpected build-up of imports — generally governed by Article 19 of [GATT](#). The Agriculture Agreement and Textiles and Clothing Agreement have different specific types of safeguards:

“special safeguards” in [agriculture](#), and “transitional safeguards” in textiles and clothing (WTO).

SERVICES

Trade in Services refers to the sale and delivery of an intangible product, called a service, between a producer and consumer. GATS, or the General Agreement on Trade in Services (Jan 1995), covers 12 sectors, including business, health, transport and education, with an eventual goal of opening up domestic sectors to international markets and removing [trade barriers](#). There are four modes of delivery and consumption of trans-border services. Mode 1: cross border supply; mode 2: consumption abroad; mode 3: foreign commercial presence; and mode 4: movement of natural persons. [FTAs](#) usually include a Services chapter which contains the Parties’ liberalization commitments. The services sector is especially important for women workers. Globally 60% of employed women work in services (ILO, Women at Work, 2016). See also reservations.

SEX

The physical and biological characteristics that distinguish males and females.

SEX-DISAGGREGATED / GENDER-DISAGGREGATED DATA

Sex-disaggregated data and gender-disaggregated data are different. Sex is a binary, biological concept and refers to women and men. Gender, on the other hand, is a relational concept and refers to the social construct of the feminine and masculine. Sex-disaggregated data are essential for gender statistics, i.e. data reflecting the situation for gender-relevant topics, such as time use, gender-based violence, or shares of women versus men in decision-making roles in government or business. An intersectional breakdown of gender data is important because women (no less than men) are not a homogeneous category, and their situation can be affected by geography, class, race, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability and other factors.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE (SEA)

The actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. Sexual abuse is the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions (UN Glossary on SEA, 2017).

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment includes such unwelcome sexually determined behaviour as physical contact and advances, sexually coloured remarks, showing pornography and sexual demand, whether by words or actions. It is discriminatory when the victim has reasonable grounds to believe that his or her objection would disadvantage him or her in connection with employment, including recruitment or promotion, or when it

creates a hostile working environment. Men, women, boy and girls may be victims of sexual harassment (OECD 2018).

SPECIAL AND DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT (SDT)

Special treatment given to developing countries, especially least-developed countries, in [WTO](#) agreements. It could take the form of longer transitional periods for implementing obligations and the assumption of lesser obligations (WTO). Some regional preferential agreements also consider SDT.

STANDARDS AND CERTIFICATION

Many trade agreements and the [WTO](#) stipulate standard-setting procedures and notifications. The use of standards has become a pervasive feature of trade and serves a variety of purposes, from ensuring the inter-operability of technical devices and facilitating the harmonization of international systems, to ensuring product quality and safety and protecting consumer interests (UNECE). There is a range of mandatory standards and certifications (defined at the national level, but embedded in international conventions) -for example, around labour, food stuffs and agricultural produce—that in certain cases empower countries to intervene in trade in order to protect human, animal or plant life or health. ‘Standards’ are characteristics which products and production processes must meet, and certification refers to the process by which conformity to standards is approved. There are also voluntary standards, which are often consumer driven, which refer especially to sustainability impact of products and processes (organic, Fair Trade, Rainforest Alliance, among many others) and are often labelled accordingly.

STANDARDS RELATED TO GENDER

Voluntary standards have had minimal impact on gender inequality, and can even reinforce the status quo in which men typically occupy a privileged position in households, workplaces and producer organizations. A few gender equality certification schemes, such as EDGE (Economic Dividends for Gender Equality), have been developed to provide a way for business, consumers and investors to demonstrate their support for women and gender-responsive practices (Sally Smith). A few voluntary consumer-driven “produced by women” labels involving women producers are also being developed (e.g. Women in Coffee). Very recently, the International Standards Organization (ISO) established IWA 34:2021, a set of common definitions related to women's entrepreneurship, such as those for women-owned business and women-led business. These definitions can be used, for example, in [women's economic empowerment](#) programmes (such as procurement and trade programmes) and for the collection of internationally comparable data on women's entrepreneurship (including the impact on local and national economies). They also provide criteria for evaluating the implementation and outcomes of programme interventions (ISO).

SUBSIDIES

There are two general types of subsidies: export and domestic. An export subsidy is a benefit conferred by a government on a firm related to its export production. A domestic subsidy is a benefit not directly linked to exports (WTO). The control of subsidies is a key element of ‘multilateral disciplines’, designed to ensure that producers in one country are not given unfair advantages over producers in others through government supports. It is a very wide concept, difficult to define and enforce in practice, It leads to frequent disputes as governments seek to justify such measures. Countervailing measures can be enforced on imports to charge an extra duty and thereby offset any harm that might be caused to domestic producers by the subsidised good entering the country. The [WTO](#) Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures disciplines the use of subsidies that distort trade and regulates the actions countries can take to counter the effects of subsidies. Agricultural subsidies are the type most commonly discussed at the WTO. *Amber Box* subsidies are domestic supports for [agriculture](#) that are considered to distort trade and therefore subject to reduction commitments. *Green Box* subsidies are domestic support for [agriculture](#) that are allowed without limits because they do not distort trade, or at most cause minimal distortion.

SUSTAINABLE TRADE

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes international trade as an engine for inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction, and an important means to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Sustainable trade is participation in the international trading system in a manner that supports the long-term domestic and global goals of economic growth, environmental protection, and strengthening social capital, including gender equality and the [economic empowerment of women](#).

TARIFFS

A tax imposed by a country on goods and [services](#) either imported from, or exported to, another country designed to raise revenue and, for imports, to protect local markets by making imports less desirable and on exports to assure supplies to local markets (regardless of price).

TRADE/ INTERNATIONAL TRADE

In trade policy and negotiations, the term “trade” is shorthand for international trade. This may lead to confusion because in economic discussion “trade” means commerce in general. For example, women traders may be carrying out only domestic trade, while [cross-border traders](#) are necessarily engaged in international trade.

TRADE FACILITATION

The [WTO](#) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) entered into force in 2017 and seeks to simplify, modernise and harmonise export and import processes. It contains measures to expedite the movement, release and clearance of goods, whether in transit or not. A gender focus on Trade Facilitation has not yet been fully developed and

developing countries have presented few projects although there a donor funds available for implementation of the TFA. See [AfT](#) and [EIF](#).

TRADE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

There are different modalities of trade impact assessment. Ex- ante evaluations of trade agreements originally focused on the possible effects on tax revenues of [tariff](#) relief. The most widely used, more recent, method has been general equilibrium modelling, to identify the effects of market liberalization. Gender specific economic impacts and distributional effects were not included in these assessments. Recently, sustainability impact assessments (SIAs) include not only economic, but also social, human rights and environmental matters, following civil society demands. In these assessments, gender is usually included under the social indicators, together with labour and corporate social responsibility (CRS), and mostly focuses on women's employment data. Assessments of the differentiated impact on women and men needs to be multidisciplinary (including economic modelling, legal and regulatory analysis, as well as a gender analysis with an intersectional approach). The analysis needs to capture how different groups of women are affected by such actions and policies based on their other identities such as class, race, ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation.

TRANSPARENCY

The elimination of information costs and institutional risks faced by business and investors by disclosure of host country laws and regulations, as well as the transparency of its policy making process. In international investment law the notion has evolved to refer to the investor transparency responsibilities to balance the rights and obligations of host countries and foreign investors in a way that facilitates not only increased [investment](#) but also the sustainable development of the host country (UNCTAD 2012). A gender responsive extension of this concept requires understanding of the different capacities, constraints and resources of men, women and others, in terms of their access to and use of the information made available by transparency requirements.

UNPAID CARE WORK

The term unpaid care work encompasses all the daily activities that sustain human lives and health, such as house work (food preparation, cleaning, laundry) and personal care (especially of children, the elderly, people who are sick or have a disability). These activities are most commonly performed by women in the household for free. The little social and economic value assigned to this work contrasts sharply with its actual importance to families and society at large. Indeed, feminist economists have shown that care is the invisible base of the socio-economic system. However, because care work is considered "women's work" it is mostly unpaid; because it is not assigned a monetary value, it is not measured; because it is not visible, it is not taken into account in policymaking (UN Gender Glossary).

VOLUNTARY SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS (VVS)

A subset of standards that are focused on themes related to sustainable development and ethical trade. They are mostly established by (inter) governmental standards bodies at national, regional and international levels, but are also used by industry and other entities to establish clear criteria for production and service delivery (Smith 2020).

WOMEN-LED BUSINESSES

There are multiple definitions for businesses owned or led by women, including the titles and percentage of ownership, management, and control that women entrepreneurs may have. The lack of a universally adopted definition brings a series of challenges across the women entrepreneurial ecosystem with regard to research, the collection of sex-disaggregated data, evidence-based policymaking, international benchmarking, as well as capacity building and access to finance and markets (ITC). Very recently, the International Standards Organization (ISO) established IWA 34:2021, a set of common definitions related to women's entrepreneurship, such as those for women-owned business and women-led business (see above).

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Women's economic empowerment is central to realizing women's rights and gender equality. It includes women's ability to participate equally in existing markets; their access to and control over productive resources, access to decent work, control over their own time, lives and bodies; and increased voice, agency and meaningful participation in economic decision-making at all levels from the household to international institutions (UN Women).

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO)

Global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations. At its heart are the WTO agreements, negotiated and signed by the bulk of the world's trading nations and ratified in their parliaments. The umbrella WTO Agreements are on goods, [services](#) and [intellectual property](#). The current complete body of WTO agreements consists of 16 different multilateral agreements (to which all WTO members are parties) and two different plurilateral agreements (to which only some WTO members are parties). Other relevant areas in the WTO are the [Dispute Settlement](#) Mechanism and the Trade Policy Reviews. The goal is to help producers of goods and [services](#), exporters, and importers conduct their business. The WTO was established in 1995 and succeeded the [GATT](#). The WTO currently has 164 members, of which 117 are developing countries or separate customs territories.

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