

## **WTO Public Forum 2019**

The WTC Navi Mumbai participated in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Public Forum 2019 between 8th-11th October 2019. The Public Forum is the WTO's largest annual outreach event. It provides a unique platform for head of states, parliamentarians, leading global business people, students, academicians and non-governmental organisations to come together and debate on a wide range of WTO issues and on some of the major trade and development topics of the day. There were nearly 1500 participants in the forum.

The WTC Navi Mumbai was represented by Mr. Abhishek Bhattacharya, Associate (Operations) at this forum. This was the first involvement of WTC Navi Mumbai with the WTO/UNCTAD organisations under the auspices of the United Nations. His research article in the previous issue of the TIPS Bulletin focused on the theme of the Forum.

The trading landscape is increasingly characterized by changes in technology, production methods, employment patterns, demand patterns, demographics, and climate to name a few. Last year's WTO Public Forum considered some of the changes influencing the trading system and how global trade would evolve over the coming decades. This year's Public Forum went a step further and considered how trade, and the trading system is adapting to these changes. Under the main theme of "Trading Forward: Adapting to a Changing World", the sub-themes of the forum included: Services – the next trade frontier, the next generation – what do Millennial & Gen Z want to see from global trade and the next chapter of the WTO – strengthening the trading system.

The program was started by an opening plenary debate which brought together a Panel of Experts who discussed about how societies can best prepare and adapt to a changing world and better harness the opportunities offered by trade. They also mentioned how countries are focusing more in new inclusive trading systems and how the services sector is increasing rapidly and countries should leverage this to increase their participation in trade. It also discussed that the next generation are playing a key role in shaping the future of the trading systems to meet their hopes and expectations. The panel was moderated by Mr. Roberto Azevedo, the Director-General of the WTO.

There were several other workshops, working sessions, debates and panel discussions focusing on several topics such as youths perceptiveness on International Trade, New digital Technologies and Financial Innovation in International Trade, opportunities and challenges for developing countries as well as Millennial and Generation Z in today's dynamic environment and also how the WTO can address today's global trade issues and brace themselves for the future. There were several state heads, industry representatives, youth representatives and academic representatives who discussed and debated on these topics and identified and analysed the potential opportunities & Challenges. All the sessions were extremely interactive where the audience were constantly made to engage in the session by organising activities and conducting question & answers sessions.

It was an extremely successful forum which provided a lot of networking opportunities & also created awareness about the current market scenario and what to expect in the near future.