

# **Trade, Environment, and the Millennium**



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In January 1995, the World Trade Organization (WTO) became the successor to GATT ----the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. The new organization was the result of years of negotiations on improving the rules-based trading system that oversees international trade. While most trade officials and others who have a direct interest in multilateral trade policy consider this multilateral system to be a major contributor to the enormous growth of world trade and income over the past half century, the WTO is viewed with suspicion and even animosity by many environmentalists. The criticisms focus on many aspects of the WTO. Some maintain that trade liberalization under WTO auspices has led to an environmentally harmful exploitation of natural and other resources, and others argue that the WTO hampers governments in pursuing environmentally friendly policies. The WTO is seen as increasingly extending its reach into areas policy with important implications for the environment. Dealing with the principal issues in the trade and environment debate will preoccupy negotiators well into the next century. They will be a focus of attention, for example, in the Meeting of Trade Ministers in Seattle just prior to the start of the next millennium. The outcome of these negotiations will be important for all WTO members. This book provides an overview of the key issues for negotiation in the period after the December 1999 WTO Ministerial Meeting in Seattle. As developing countries have a great deal at stake in the outcome of many topics in this complex debate, the authors have specifically addressed their special interests in these negotiations.

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