

Parallel Session on the World Trade Report 2025 and Launch of Its Chinese Edition

【Basic Information】

Keynote Speeches:

Moderator:

WANG Rongming President of Shanghai University of International Business and Economics

Speaker:

HAN Yong Director General of the Department of WTO Affairs, Ministry of Commerce of China

Johanna HILL Deputy Director-General of WTO (Video Address)

MA Jianchun Chairperson of China Society for WTO Studies

Panel Discussion:

Moderator:

DING Ru Associate Professor of School of International Law, China University of Political Science and Law

Speaker:

Michael BLANGA-GUBBAY Economist of WTO Secretariat

CHEN Yusong Deputy Director General of the Department of WTO Affairs, Ministry of Commerce of China

Alejandro JARA Former Ambassador of Chile to the WTO

WEI Kai Chief of AI Research Centre, China Academy of Information and Communications Technology

Bernard HOEKMAN Professor of European University Institute

ZHA Xiaogang Director of International Policy Center, Tencent Research Institute

【Brief Introduction】

As one of the sub-forums of the 8th Hongqiao International Economic Forum, the "Seminar on the World Trade Report 2025 and Launch of Its Chinese Edition" was held in Hall C0-03, Office Building C, National Exhibition and Convention Center (Shanghai) on the morning of November 6, 2025. Hosted by the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, undertaken by Shanghai University of International Business and Economics, and supported by the China Society of World Trade Organization, the event consisted of two sessions: a keynote speech and a panel discussion.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming the global economy, demonstrating significant potential to boost trade efficiency, reduce costs, and create new service models. According to WTO simulations, AI could increase global trade by nearly 40% by 2040. How to ensure the benefit brought by AI benefit all countries, and effectively address issues such as the digital divide, infrastructure gaps, and policy incoherence, deserve in-depth consideration by all stakeholders.

This seminar, titled "Making Trade and AI Work Together to the Benefit of All", explores the dynamic relationship between AI and international trade. Through this dialogue, high-level representatives from government, industry, academia, and research sectors worldwide delve into the interplay between AI and international trade, focusing on how policy coordination, capacity building, and international cooperation can ensure that AI technology serves as a powerful tool for promoting inclusive growth and narrowing the development gap.



[Keynote Speech]

During the Keynote Speech session, guests included HAN Yong, Director General of the Department of WTO Affairs, Ministry of Commerce of China; Johanna HILL, Deputy Director-General of WTO; and MA Jianchun, Chairperson of China Society for WTO Studies. The guests conducted in-depth discussions on the impacts, challenges, and countermeasures of artificial intelligence (AI) on the development of global trade. In terms of impacts, the current global trade pattern is undergoing profound changes. As a general-purpose technology, AI has demonstrated enormous potential to reshape the pathways of the global economy and trade. Simulation studies show that by 2040, AI is expected to drive a 40% growth in global exports and boost GDP by 12%-13%. This "dual 40% effect" highlights the strong momentum of technological innovation. Regarding challenges, technological dividends are not automatically realized. The rapid development of AI may exacerbate unbalanced development among countries. Data indicates that without effective intervention, the income growth of low-income countries is projected to be only 8% by 2040, far lower than the 14% increase in high-income economies. Such an "intelligence gap" may further consolidate global development disparities. In terms of countermeasures, it is necessary to build a more inclusive and equitable global governance framework: As a key element for AI development, rules formulation regarding cross-border data flow and source code protection urgently needs to be advanced, and the E-Commerce Agreement reached by the WTO in 2024 has laid an important foundation for this; It must be recognized that a single trade policy is insufficient to address complex challenges. Labor policies, intellectual property protection, competition policies, and other areas need to be incorporated into an overall consideration to form policy synergy; Special attention should be paid to the balanced development of digital infrastructure. Through innovative models such as regional cooperation and resource sharing, developing countries can be helped to break through resource constraints; the international community should strive to enhance regulatory interoperability, avoid policy fragmentation, and promote the formation of an open, transparent, and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system. This will ensure that AI truly becomes a tool for promoting common development rather than a wedge that widens differences.



HAN Yong, Director General of the Department of WTO Affairs, Ministry of Commerce of China, attended the Parallel Session on the World Trade Report 2025 and Launch of Its Chinese Edition and delivered a keynote speech



Johanna HILL, Deputy Director-General of WTO, attended via video the Parallel Session on the World Trade Report 2025 and Launch of Its Chinese Edition and delivered a keynote speech



MA Jianchun, Chairperson of China Society for WTO Studies, attended the Parallel Session on the World Trade Report 2025 and Launch of Its Chinese Edition and delivered a keynote speech



WANG Rongming, President of Shanghai University of International Business and Economics, moderated the Keynote Speech session of the Parallel Session on the World Trade Report 2025 and Launch of Its Chinese Edition

[Panel Discussion]

During the Panel Discussion session, guests included Michael BLANGA-GUBBAY, Economist of WTO Secretariat; CHEN Yusong, Deputy Director General of the Department of WTO Affairs, and Ministry of Commerce of China; Alejandro JARA, Former Ambassador of Chile to the WTO; WEI Kai, Chief of AI Research Centre, China Academy of Information and Communications Technology; Bernard HOEKMAN, Professor of European University Institute; and ZHA Xiaogang, Director of International Policy Center, Tencent Research Institute.

The guests conducted multi-dimensional discussions and prospects on the implementation pathways for the coordinated development of artificial intelligence (AI) and trade. From the perspective of technological evolution, AI is rapidly expanding from chatbots to broader fields such as physical intelligence and biomedicine, presenting a "Cambrian explosion-style" development momentum. This technological evolution features the dual-track advancement of "augmenting human capabilities" and "full automation", which not only creates new models of human-machine collaboration but also brings challenges of employment structure transformation. From the perspective of trade development, AI not only optimizes supply chain management and reduces transaction costs but also profoundly changes the connotation and form of trade. In the future, the AI component in goods trade will increase significantly, and digital services trade will be more reflected as AI-driven cross-border services.

From the perspective of policy support, the following measures are needed: strengthening the construction of digital infrastructure, especially key areas such as computing power centers and internet networks; fostering independent innovation capabilities to help developing countries establish local R&D systems; adhering to the principle of open cooperation to avoid technological isolation; carrying out targeted capacity building to improve the AI literacy of officials and technicians through training programs; and improving global governance rules, promoting the formulation of international norms adapting to the AI era relying on the WTO platform. From the perspective of international cooperation, the WTO has unique platform advantages, and frameworks such as the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) provide an institutional foundation for AI governance.

As a "Phase I" achievement, the E-Commerce Agreement has reserved space for subsequent discussions, which can be further deepened in key areas such as data flow and computing power services in the future. Meanwhile, it is necessary to strengthen the coordinated development among international organizations and promote cooperation

between the WTO and UN specialized agencies in standard-setting and capacity building. From the perspective of enterprise development, enterprises attach particular importance to the interoperability of governance systems. Currently, with the coexistence of different regulatory models in the EU, the United States, China and other countries, there is an urgent need to establish a more coordinated rule system to reduce compliance costs and promote technology diffusion. Looking forward, the in-depth integration of AI and trade requires continuous synergy among governments, international organizations, academia and industry. On the one hand, we should base ourselves on reality; promote the WTO to make substantive progress on existing agendas, including completing e-commerce negotiations and promoting trade facilitation, so as to enhance the credibility of the multilateral system. On the other hand, we should look to the long term and gradually narrow the development gap through open innovation, talent cultivation and joint construction of infrastructure. Only by transforming technological potential into tangible development achievements and innovation enthusiasm into inclusive institutional arrangements can we ensure that trade growth in the AI era truly benefits every corner of the world and achieve the global development goals of openness, inclusiveness and sustainability.



Michael BLANGA-GUBBAY, Economist of WTO Secretariat, attended the Parallel Session on the World Trade Report 2025 and Launch of Its Chinese Edition and participated in the panel discussion



CHEN Yusong, Deputy Director General of the Department of WTO Affairs, Ministry of Commerce of China, attended the Parallel Session on the World Trade Report 2025 and Launch of Its Chinese Edition and participated in the panel discussion



Alejandro JARA, Former Ambassador of Chile to the WTO, attended the Parallel Session on the World Trade Report 2025 and Launch of Its Chinese Edition and participated in the panel



WEI Kai, Chief of AI Research Centre, China Academy of Information and Communications Technology, attended the Parallel Session on the World Trade Report 2025 and Launch of Its Chinese Edition and participated in the panel discussion



Bernard HOEKMAN, Professor of European University Institute, attended the Parallel Session on the World Trade Report 2025 and Launch of Its Chinese Edition and participated in the panel



ZHA Xiaogang, Director of International Policy Center, Tencent Research Institute, attended the Parallel Session on the World Trade Report 2025 and Launch of Its Chinese Edition and participated in the panel discussion



DING Ru, Associate Professor of School of International Law, China University of Political Science and Law, moderated the Panel Discussion of the Parallel Session on the World Trade Report 2025 and Launch of Its Chinese Edition