

3 The trade policy environment

This unit provides an overview of the trade policy environment – the social, political and economic context in which global trade takes place – and the broad gender impacts.

It will help you to:

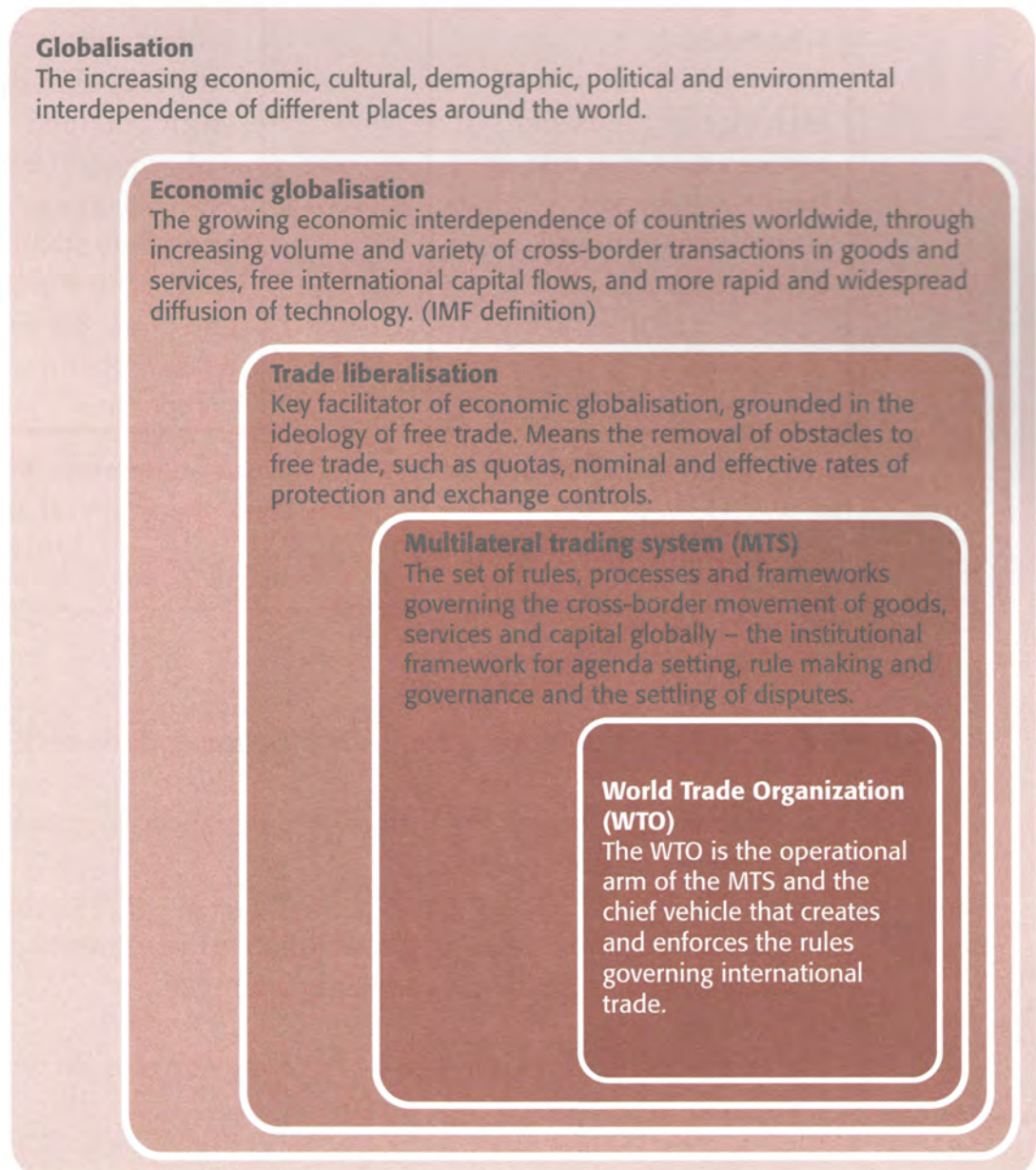
- describe the context in which trade takes place
- give examples of ways in which trade liberalisation has gender impacts
- start to identify ways of influencing the trade policy environment
- identify factors that may shape the trade policy environment in the future.

In this unit

The context
Gender and trade liberalisation
Getting gender on the agenda
Emerging issues

The context

Moving from the general to the specific, the context for the trade policy environment can be shown in a diagram like this.



There is more about the MTS and WTO in Unit 4 and more about regional and bilateral agreements in Unit 5.

Aspects of the trade policy environment

In trade policy-setting, there are two diametrically opposed ideologies: free trade and protectionism.

Free trade

When the international exchange of goods and services is neither restricted nor encouraged by government-imposed trade barriers



Protectionism

Advocacy of trade barriers (such as tariffs) and non-tariff barriers (such as quotas or health and safety standards) to restrict the import of goods and protect domestic producers and workers from competition

Most countries and interest groups prefer to be somewhere in between the two. However, free trade is the over-riding philosophical and ideological orientation of the MTS

Links between globalisation, trade liberalisation and the MTS

- 1 Globalisation means the increasing integration of economies into a more borderless world.
- 2 The 'bricks and mortar' of globalisation is the movement of goods, services and capital into and out of countries.
- 3 This movement is facilitated by the reduction and elimination of border measures.
- 4 The MTS, geared to trade liberalisation, provides the negotiation spaces to bring about this reduction and elimination.
- 5 The MTS promotes wider and deeper integration by:
 - decreasing tariffs
 - removing non-tariff barriers
 - pushing for 'behind the border' measures (i.e., changes internal to a country, not just relating to tariff and border controls) and supportive policies such as those relating to competition policy, harmonisation of product standards and protection of intellectual property rights.



Activity 3.1: Check your understanding

Imagine you have been asked to explain these questions to someone else.

How would you define the current dominant ideology of trade policy?

What is the MTS?

How does the WTO relate to the MTS?

How does the MTS promote economic integration?

If you can't answer the questions, look back at the unit so far.



- Ask participants to look for definitions of trade liberalisation and statements of trade liberalisation policy in your context. Their first step could be to do an internet search for trade liberalisation + name of country/region. A more sophisticated search would involve studying examples of trade policy documents or plans and relating them to the aspects discussed above.
- Choose a recent newspaper article about trade and analyse its use of terms or relate the content to the context and aspects outlined here.

Gender and trade liberalisation

Unit 2 introduced ways in which trade liberalisation impacts on gender inequalities. This section of Unit 3 continues this topic, exploring further the broad impacts. Unit 4 will look in more detail at impacts in particular sectors.

First, here are three short case studies to illustrate impacts of trade liberalisation. They are followed by a discussion of four important ways in which trade liberalisation may have social and economic gender impacts, then by an activity to help you examine the case studies.

Case study 3.1 illustrates the gender impact of the phasing out of the Multifibre Arrangement (MFA) in India – for example, on employment and wages.

Case study 3.1: The phasing out of the MFA in India

Accession to the WTO, phasing out of the Multifibre Arrangement (MFA) and liberalisation of capital and commodity flows characterise the environment facing many countries in Asia at present.

The expiry of the MFA in 2005 in particular is having a significant impact on the region. (The MFA came into force in 1974. A final version of it was the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing, which was to be implemented in four phases, starting on 1 January 1995 and coming to an end in 2005.) Some of the poorest countries in Asia, which benefited from the export quotas and developed textiles and garment industries under the MFA, are now facing challenges in sustaining textile and apparel production, while other countries like China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, etc seem to have increased their exports to the United States and Europe. The Asian economies are involved in tough competition with each other to increase exports, which exerts pressure on wages, terms of employment, technology and form of production not only in the apparel and textile sectors, but also in other traded and non-traded sectors.

The manufacturing sector in India in the post-reforms period has not generated much employment, particularly in the organised sector. This is mainly due to the increase in the capital intensity of the sector. Though some employment has been generated in this sector, most of it is in the unorganised sector, managed through sub contracting and outsourcing. The textile and garment industry, which contributes significantly to national exports and national income, is important for employment generation. The expiry of the MFA is therefore important for the economy, as it can generate large-scale employment and enable the country to promote a labour-intensive export-based strategy for development.

India has several advantages so far as its textiles and garment industry is concerned. These include a strong multifibre base, the largest loomage



and second largest spindleage in the world, a wide range of production technology, a vast pool of skilled labour, and dynamic entrepreneurship as well as a flexible production system, a huge domestic market and a broad production base within the country. In short, it has, within the country, a good supply chain. However, the industry is also facing several constraints like power shortages, infrastructure gaps, fragmented production units, etc.

The government, as well as the industry, has taken several initiatives to fight these limitations and to promote exports. In fact, these initiatives have created euphoria and the industry is experiencing a boom period. It is growing rapidly along with its exports. The boom has brought about several changes in the characteristics of the industry as well as its labour hiring practices. Two major trends are observed in this context. On the one hand the industry is moving towards high value-added products, where the technology is improving fast, the average size of the unit is increasing, and labour productivity and wages are growing (though wages are not growing fast). On the other hand in low/ medium value products the industry is depending more and more on sub-contracting and outsourcing to home-based and non home-based units. The industry is decentralising here, and with cost-cutting measures the employment quality is declining fast in this segment.

Women, however, are losing in both these segments. Their share in employment is declining in the high value-added segment, as women do not usually possess the required skills. Their share is increasing in the lower segment, mainly in the unorganised sector, where the quality of employment is very poor. In other words, the textile boom is not benefiting women enough either in the value-added segment or in the unorganised segment.

Gender inequality in the labour market is reflected in all major labour market outcomes: employment and unemployment, industrial and occupational segregations, employment, wages and related benefits and access to improved skills, productivity and upward mobility. Data on the gender wage gap, which is an important indicator of gender inequalities in the labour market, show that this has increased in all the sub-sectors of the industry and in all the segments. The highest wage gap is in the organised formal sector, which is managed most professionally, and the lowest gap is in the unorganised home-based sector. In the handloom and handicraft sector, however, new models have emerged that have successfully combined the heritage, professional management, employment intensity and gender equity. These models are produced by NGO-managed production units like Fabindia, Desi, Anokhi, SEWA etc, who seem to be exporting on a large scale and promoting gender equity in the labour market in many ways.

SOURCE: HIRWAY, 2006.



The next case study describes some of the wider impacts of trade liberalisation and employment loss in the South African clothing industry – for example, on households, especially children, and the broader community.

Case study 3.2: Trade liberalisation and employment loss in the South African clothing industry

A report from South Africa sketches a vivid picture of the gendered impact of the adjustment costs of trade liberalisation on women in the clothing industry, illustrated through personal experiences. This material is drawn from interviews and focus group discussions conducted in 2003 among a random sample of 50 women clothing workers in the Western Cape who had lost their jobs. While this is not a 'representative' sample, the documented lived experience of these women gives us a compelling picture of the human cost of job losses and the additional burdens this places on the day-to-day lives of thousands of women and their families. Statistics alone cannot tell their story.

The picture that emerges shows clearly that retrenchment and liquidations have pushed women workers into deeper levels of poverty. It is also clear that labour markets exploit the weak position from which women enter the economy and reinforce gender inequality. As the profile of workers before loss of employment shows, female clothing workers are an especially insecure group. Many of these women were already battling to survive on their low wages, and many of them were the breadwinners in the household. They were already pooling resources and sharing basic living requirements with extended families. In many cases, their low wages also helped to support other dependants, in addition to their own children.

As a number of people are dependent on the clothing worker's income, the impact of job loss has a ripple effect on households, especially on children. This increases the burden on these women who also fulfil domestic and reproductive functions in the home. Tensions rise over food, money and space. Women who were once active players in the labour market often lose their independence along with their income. Job loss pushes them into new power relations with ex-partners, partners or husbands, parents and other members of their family. These women are not only financially disempowered, but can experience a diminished sense of worth and identity.

The ripple effect extends beyond the family and into the broader community as the clothing worker and her family become more dependent on others to provide their basic needs – for everything from food, money for transport fares, electricity, water and rent. Some women coped by moving in with family members to pool resources; others

sent their children away to live with other family members. This has a direct effect on the social fabric of families and communities as parents are separated from their children. It is impossible to maintain healthy nutrition under these conditions as income losses curtail spending on food. This again builds reliance on family and community networks to get food. But these sources can be exhausted. Workers who had only been unemployed for two months were forced to ask neighbours for food, at times finding their request denied. With broad unemployment in South Africa at 40 per cent, more and more people are edging below the breadline, with nothing to share. Losing a job means losing access to a sick fund, and unemployed workers join the ranks of those who depend on overburdened and under-resourced state facilities.

Most of the women interviewed had not completed secondary education, irrespective of their age. This shows that the attainment of secondary school qualifications is as difficult for a younger post-apartheid generation as for their older counterparts. After job loss, even paying school fees for preschool, primary and secondary school children becomes a problem, and children will eventually have to leave school to help earn an income. In this way the cycle of low education and all its consequences is perpetuated for another generation.

Conflict and violence in communities are mostly the result of crime. With high unemployment crime becomes rife. This provides the context for the endemic proportions of sexual violence against women and children. Ironically, coping strategies that lead to overpopulated dwellings can also breed conditions for sexual assault.

The women in the study were forced to manage their lives after retrenchment with little financial or emotional support. There were no community outreach programmes or services to address their needs or anxieties. The vast majority were not aware of any state institutions that they could even approach for help. While some women were receiving state grants – mostly old age pensions – most women experienced great difficulty in accessing their unemployment payouts, despite the fact that they had contributed to the Unemployment Insurance Fund while employed. All the women cited unaffordable transport costs as a barrier to finding new employment and accessing food aid, health-care services or state benefits. Bureaucratic hold-ups in the payment of Provident Fund money made it even more difficult for women to maintain their livelihoods. It is particularly telling that although most women had lost their jobs only two months prior to the interviews, they were already struggling, with no 'safety-net' to fall back on.

Like thousands of other women in South Africa who have lost their jobs over the past decade, the women in this study are in an emergency



situation. The government, trade unions and groups representing the interests of women need to learn from this experience for their future involvement in trade policy-making, and take immediate steps to prevent these women, their families and communities from slipping into a poverty trap.

SOURCE: DEEDAT AND VAN DER WESTHUIZEN, 2004.

The third case study illustrates constraints that can prevent women benefiting from economic and trade opportunities.

Case study 3.3: Women in the Ugandan beekeeping value chain

Apiculture in Uganda contributes about 8 per cent to the national GDP and is an important seasonal activity that has traditionally been and has remained predominantly rural. Previously, behavioural taboos and cultural practices prevented women's participation, but the introduction of modern beekeeping, including modernised hives and technological practices, has enabled women to more easily enter the practice. This has resulted in quite remarkable gains on one level, such as the ownership of large enterprises by some Ugandan women. However, despite this, the majority of rural women working within the apiculture value chain of production are concentrated in the stages that provide the least opportunity for economic gain, and particularly, limited direct access to regional and intercontinental markets that lead to commercial and retail sales. Most commonly found within the first stage of the chain (obtaining production inputs), they are constrained by limited access to resources such as land and credit. Other stages, such as apiary management and product processing, also continue to be constrained by low levels of decision-making power, limiting their ownership over the entire production process.

SOURCE: UGANDA EXPORT PROMOTION BOARD, 2006.

Impacts

As the case studies have illustrated, trade policies affect women and men differently and therefore affect gender equality.

This section recaps some of the broad impacts.

The effects of globalisation from a gender perspective

The likely positive effects may include:

- acquisition of new skills
- higher income
- new opportunities for women and men
- wider reproductive choices.

The likely negative effects may include:

- more informalisation of work
- devaluation of women's work
- heightened gender stereotyping of employment
- increasing burden for women (paid and unpaid labour)
- further marginalisation of women.

As you will recall from Unit 2, research shows that trade liberalisation impacts on women's social and economic status in at least four important ways.

1 Employment

It affects women's employment status and may increase their income. However, without complementary measures (such as day care, access to transportation and ensuring proper health and occupational safety standards), it imposes a burden on women's time availability/ use as well as on women's health and morbidity.

2 Earnings and conditions of work

It has increased employment in the industrial sector and in commercial agriculture as well as offering work opportunities via subcontracting and home-based work in the manufacturing and services sectors. However, this is not always entirely benign or beneficial, as it tends to occur under poor conditions of work and pay and often entails violations of women's rights.

3 Markets and market share

It may open the way for cheap (subsidised) foreign goods to enter the local markets, dislocating women farmers and micro-entrepreneurs. Trade in second-hand clothing or prepared/ fast food replaces dressmaking and informal, small, local food establishments. However, women and men are also consumers and may benefit from cheaper goods.

4 Social expenditure and the care economy

It may lead to cuts in social expenditure (e.g., health care and education) when governments experience reduced revenue due to reductions in tariffs. Most of the programmes that are cut or eliminated are those that benefit women and girls. Governments often try to offset declining revenues with the imposition of other taxes such as value added tax (VAT), or user fees on basics such as water. These are more burdensome for women because of their responsibilities for household purchases.

When policy makers are not aware of existing gender biases and inequalities and how these affect women's access to resources and credit, trade policies may have counterproductive outcomes. For example, it has been argued that gender-based institutional biases that affect women's access to credit and training opportunities create inefficiencies. This may especially be the case with regard to agriculture and food production. This may ultimately result in export promotion schemes not having the desired outcomes.

The next activity asks you to analyse the impacts of trade liberalisation in the three case studies.

Activity 3.2: Analysing the impacts of trade liberalisation in the case studies

In the three case studies, note whether trade liberalisation has had social and economic gender impacts in the four ways outlined:

- 1 employment
- 2 earnings and conditions of work
- 3 markets and market share
- 4 social expenditure and the care economy.

Try to identify the specific causes of impacts in the boxes on the following page.

- Use local case studies/ examples to examine the cause and effect links of trade liberalisation impacts.
- If you selected local examples for Unit 2, study these in further depth in the light of the ideas in this unit.



The phasing out of the MFA in India

Impacts

Causes

The South African clothing industry

Impacts

Causes

The Ugandan beekeeping value chain

Impacts

Causes

Getting gender on the agenda: towards gender-sensitive trade policy

Think whether you agree with the following statements and whether they apply in your context.

There is now some official recognition, at national, regional and international levels, of the different impacts of trade liberalisation on women's economic and social status relative to men's. But this has not been translated into policy.

An important reason for the great silence around the gender dimensions of trade liberalisation is the belief among trade officials, negotiators and technical staff that trade policy is gender blind in its orientation and gender neutral in its effects.

Any attempt to alter the dynamics of trade liberalisation from the perspective of gender equality will not succeed unless it also challenges the way trade policy is formulated and decisions are made at all levels – sub-national, national, regional and multilateral.

These statements made about trade policy and trade liberalisation suggest that these are seen as gender neutral in their formulation and impact. But the many possible gender impacts are already becoming apparent.

Two main ways to get gender recognised and on the agenda are by:

- informing
- influencing policy.

This unit introduces these two approaches which are, of course, complementary.

Informing

This approach seeks to identify and provide evidence about ways trade liberalisation affects women and men differently. It recognises that there is a need for sound data to influence policy makers and negotiators.

Using gender analysis to integrate gender into trade policy

What is gender analysis?

'The conceptual and methodological framework for analysing, monitoring and evaluating the cultural, economic, social, legal and political relations between men and women in society. Within this framework there must also be recognition of the crucially important links between gender and other social relations such as class, race, ethnicity and North/ South relationships.'

(WILLIAMS, 2003, P. 201)

Gender analysis seeks to answer such questions as:

- In a given country, what are the gender impacts (current or future) of trade policy on production, employment, income and unpaid work?
- How do these relate specifically to import liberalisation, export promotion and market access?

Gender analysis is based on three basic facts about women and men:

- Their traditional roles affect how they can respond to trade opportunities and changes in household, community, market and state.
- They have different access to and control of assets and resources (material, social, technological, knowledge).
- They play different roles in production in different sectors of the economy.

Gender analysis also gives recognition to women's unpaid labour in social reproduction – in other words, it recognises that women's labour in the household and the community is central to all economies.

The key questions then to ask in analysis of trade and gender in any sector of the economy (e.g., agriculture, services, intellectual property, NAMA) are:

At the point when changes in trade policy take place:

- What are the different situations of women and men?
- What mechanisms and measures are built into the changes to take account of these differences?
- What are the expected results of the changes?

Later:

- Did these expected results happen?
- If not, what corrective mechanisms and measures are needed?

*Examples of gender analysis questions**Import liberalisation*

- How do cheaper imports affect local production as a source of livelihoods?
- Will eliminating or decreasing cross-border taxes on goods and services affect public expenditure and provision of social services?
- Do resources go into sectors dominated by women or men?
What are the implications at household level?

Export promotion

- How far do exports rely on the labour of women compared with men in commercial agriculture, export processing manufacturing and data entry/ coding?
- Does export promotion affect women's access to and control over resources such as land, credit and technical assistance as compared with men?
- What is the effect on women's and men's labour time?
- In manufacturing does it mean expansion of the informal sector and homeworking, with different effects on women's and men's labour?
- Does time spent on unpaid work decrease or increase?
- Are there health-related hazards created by employment?
- Will wages and income be sustainable in the long term?
- Is there gender stereotyping – for example, are 'women's jobs' less secure and less well paid than 'men's jobs'?

*Market access**At the level of international trade agreements*

- Do market access burdens (e.g., requirements on product quality, information on import and export procedures) have different gender impacts?
- Do those product sectors where women are important producers face lack of market access to a WTO market economy?

At the level of the domestic economy

- What gender differences are there in access to information about investment, grants and loans, market information, prices, taxes, etc?



Activity 3.3: Highlighting the relevance of gender analysis

Look again at the examples of gender analysis questions.

Underline two questions relevant to you and your work.

If none seem relevant for you, what would be important questions for your country/ region?

Use of gender analysis

This example shows how gender analysis can be used – in this case, for detailed analysis of specific sectors. It describes a study that looks at the impact of trade expansion on gender empowerment generally.



Case study 3.4: Export orientation of the economy and women's empowerment: empirical evidence from India

This study is an attempt to analyse the relationship between women's empowerment and export share in state domestic product. The study basically examines whether export-oriented change in the production structure can bring changes in the socio-economic condition of women in India.

This study shows that there is significant positive association between export share in state domestic product and the empowerment of women. The regression result indicates that the higher the share of exports in the economy, the higher is the empowerment of women.

However, if you remove education from the gender development index, the effect of trade liberalisation on gender development becomes insignificant, which indicates the crucial role of education in delivering holistic benefits from trade liberalisation.

Sector-specific case studies conclude that employment opportunities have increased in export-oriented sectors, especially for women workers. Average wages have improved. Sectoral analysis further indicates that integration into global markets does generate uncertainties for women, but these may be outweighed by net economic gains and distributional

effects. The macro indicators have demonstrated net welfare gains for women, but anecdotal evidence has also shown that global integration has had adverse consequence for women in several instances.

The paper analyses the impact of trade expansion on gender empowerment in India. It considers women's employment in India

- in terms of rural/urban employment
- by state
- by sectoral distribution of the female workforce in nine sectors (in which around 90 per cent of Indian women are employed) over two time periods: 1993/1994 and 1999/2000. The sectors are:
 - 1 agriculture
 - 2 livestock
 - 3 textiles and textile products
 - 4 beverages and tobacco
 - 5 food products
 - 6 construction
 - 7 petty retail trade
 - 8 education and research
 - 9 domestic services.

Through econometric analysis the study makes an attempt to analyse the relationship between women's empowerment in a composite sense and export share in state domestic product.

The following sectors are then discussed with empirical analysis at sectoral level:

- agriculture (and allied activities horticulture and fisheries)
- textile and garment industry
- food processing industry
- service sector and trade in services
- IT sector
- other services (hotels, education, health care).

SOURCE: JHA AND AHMED, 2006.



- Hold a group discussion or small group work to identify relevant questions for a local (country/ region/ sector) gender analysis.
- Ask participants to suggest areas for gender analysis.
- With advance planning, these activities can be continued and refined in the course of later units.
- See Unit 7 Tools for two gender analytical frameworks: the Harvard framework (# 5) and Longwe framework (# 6).

Influencing

This approach seeks to influence policy makers and negotiators. Here we focus on policy-making at national level.

Governance and the trade policy environment

Because of the assumption that trade liberalisation is gender neutral, gender has not figured much in trade policy discussions and agendas. This includes the issues of who decides and who is consulted in the decision-making process. It also involves issues around transparency and participation, accountability and democratic participation.

Again, think whether or not you agree with the following statements and whether they apply in your context.

To date gender has not been a significant variable in the agenda-setting, rule-making or enforcement of trade policy.

There is very little attempt to link gender equality objectives and gender mainstreaming with trade and export promotion areas.

How is trade policy made? How does it feed into trade policy negotiations? On the next page we give questions that might be put to someone responsible for trade policy-making at national level.

Questions for a policy maker

- 1 How is trade policy made at national level?
- 2 Whose are the critical voices involved in forming national trade policy?
- 3 How much do gender issues figure in trade policy-making discussions?
- 4 What do you as a trade policy maker need to know in order to integrate gender issues into negotiations?
- 5 What do you as a trade policy maker need to do in order to integrate gender issues into negotiations?
- 6 What kind of practical tools would be helpful for you?
- 7 How does national trade policy feed into international trade negotiations?
- 8 What are the opportunities and difficulties for trade policy makers in getting gender issues included in discussions and negotiations?

At national level, getting gender onto the agenda means:

- holding governments accountable for commitments to gender equality
- making gender analysis and a gender perspective an integral part of the trade policy-making environment
- ensuring coordination among sector ministries
- ensuring participation of national and regional gender machineries
- enabling global agencies and women's organisations to weigh in on the trade debate and women's voices to be heard.

Integrating gender into trade policy decision-making

Avenues for integrating a gender perspective and analysis into trade policy decision-making lie in:

- the emerging spate of impact assessments of trade agreements (along with the social and environmental impact assessment, a gender impact assessment has validity)
- the review of trade policy by the WTO's Trade Policy Review Division
- the explicit development focus of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA)
- the tremendous debate around public and essential services, which opens up the area of social justice and equity in the trade agenda
- advocacy for gender mainstreaming within the key sectors, ministries and inter-governmental fora that deal with trade policy
- technical assistance/ trade capacity-building programmes (WTO, UNCTAD, World Bank, etc)
- special and differential treatment (SDT) framework (provisions that give developing countries special rights)
- Aid for Trade integrated framework. Seen as a complement to the DDA and a way of making trade, development and growth fit together. Includes technical assistance, institution capacity building, infrastructure requirements and adjustment/ transition assistance.

There are five key issues relating to governance and trade policy-making at national level:

- agenda setting
- rule-making
- enforcement
- accountability
- critical voices.

The next activity explores the important questions each issue raises and asks you to answer them for your own context. This may involve some research.

Identify any gaps. Make notes about how you can find the information to fill those gaps, particularly in order to identify whose are the critical voices in the formulation of national trade policy.



Activity 3.4: Exploring the five key issues

As far as you can, answer the questions listed below:

Agenda setting

Who sets the agenda?

What and whose are the predominant values?

How is participation of different groups included in negotiations?

Rule-making

What is the basis for it?

What are the processes, formal and informal?

What are the procedures for ensuring fairness, democracy and accountability?

How are structural and other imbalances recognised and remedied?

What are the imbalances? What mechanisms exist to assess and correct these?

Enforcement

What are the mechanisms and processes for arbitration and enforcing judgements?

What are the processes for ensuring fairness, democracy and transparency?

Accountability

What are the processes to promote gender sensitivity in the design of trade rules?

What are the processes for monitoring day-to-day gender impacts?

Critical voices

Who are the critical voices in the formulation of national trade policy?

What is the gender distribution of trade delegations/ high level technical personnel in ministries of trade and missions in Geneva, regional secretariats and the WTO?

At national level, which ministries (and who in these ministries) prepare reports and take part in trade policy and related decision-making?

What is the role of women's/ gender machineries in these processes?

Are gender experts involved in discussions at all levels?

Now choose an example of trade policy-making (for example, a specific agreement) and note what you, in your present role, could do to influence it. (Look back at the policy maker questions and think especially about questions 4, 5 and 6.)

- With a group, do a collaborative activity to share participants' knowledge and experience to map out answers to the five key questions above about agenda setting, rule-making, enforcement, accountability and critical voices. Or, depending on the group, focus on one of the questions.
- Develop this activity to identify any gaps in information or understanding and plan the further research/ fact-finding needed to get the answers.
- Discuss and prioritise the possibilities for effective influencing.
- Identify the individuals who are 'critical voices'.
- Develop a role-play exercise about influencing trade policy. Use a case study/ current issue as the basis, letting participants take the part of different interests or individuals (e.g., trade minister, producer, WTO). Use the 'Questions for a policy maker' from above as a prompt.

See the first tool in Unit 7 Tools #1 Checklist: Trade policy development – bringing in gender issues.

Emerging issues

Here are two activities to encourage you to think about how the trade policy environment has changed over time and may change in the foreseeable future. You can decide how much time to spend on this, and how much depth to go into. The activities are easier to do in a group, but even if you are working alone, using the action guide as self study material, you can use them to stimulate your thinking.

Activity 3.5: Looking back and looking forward

First think back 20 years. What are the main factors that have shaped the trade policy environment in the last 20 years – and which of them could you have foreseen 20 years ago?

You might have identified factors like the following:

- end of the Cold War
- information and communications technology (ICT) developments, including internet
- emergence of China, India and Brazil as big players
- cheap air travel
- national and regional factors
- factors relevant for developing or developed countries.

Now try and spot similar factors that could shape the next 20 years (including some that may seem far-fetched).

Some possible factors you might have identified:

- rises in fuel prices make global trade in basic foodstuffs uneconomic
- advances in robotics make cheap manual labour redundant
- biotechnology advances
- climate change leads to major conflicts over water
- China and the US stop being friends
- feared bird flu epidemic materialises with decimation of world's population
- national and regional factors
- factors relevant for developing or developed countries.

Activity 3.6: Exploring the future

Now choose one of the factors you identified as shaping the next 20 years and use it to build a simple scenario, asking:

- How will this factor affect the trade policy environment internationally or locally?
- What will be its gender impacts?

Follow the steps in the box overleaf.



Steps

What is the factor you wish to explore? (e.g., rising fuel prices)

What now? Describe the current situation in relation to this factor, including gender aspects? (e.g., the political, economic, social or technological aspects of fuel supplies and prices)

What next? What are likely developments in relation to this factor (e.g., collapse of current trading arrangements for fuel), including gender impacts? Look at the next

5 years

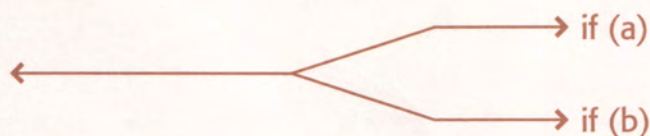
10 years

20 years

You can draw a timeline to illustrate the developments



You can add branching lines to indicate alternatives and develop those lines further (e.g., what would happen if (a) or (b)?)



Finally, describe

- What you think the scenario means for the main players involved in this story, with a particular focus on gender impacts.
- What you (your country, region, economic sector, organisation) could do to deal with the condition in the future(s) described.



- Adapt this scenario activity to make it more relevant to the particular context – for example, specify the factor to explore.
- With a group, develop more than one branch and then compare the resulting scenarios. Discuss the difference between probable futures and desirable futures and the kind of action needed to make desirable futures more likely.
- Organise a more complex scenario activity. There are a number of websites with information about scenario building exercises, e.g., <http://www.infinitefutures.com> or <http://eg.arizona.edu/futures>.



Key reading Unit 3 (on CD-ROM)

A reminder that the key readings are supplied on the accompanying CD-ROM.

Chapters 1 and 2 of *Gender Mainstreaming in the Multilateral Trading System* by Mariama Williams.

This is a handbook for policy makers and other stakeholders. The ideas in this unit are based on these chapters.

Chapter 1 'Multilateral and regional trading arrangements and globalisation' reviews the main features of the MTS and the links between it and globalisation, how the trade system is governed and issues of transparency and participation.

Chapter 2 'Gender and the Multilateral Trading System' examines the context for gender and trade, and the role gender plays in the governance of international trade at regional and multilateral levels.

Unit review

Use this review of what has been covered to assess your progress. Look again at the unit objectives and check if you can now do them. Look through your answers to the activities and see if you want to add to them.

This unit has covered the following main points:

- an overview of the trade policy environment and connections between globalisation, trade liberalisation and the MTS
- the impacts of trade liberalisation on gender
- approaches to getting gender on the trade policy agenda through informing and influencing
- thinking about the trade policy environment in the future.

To recap, the learning objectives for the unit:

- describe the context in which trade takes place
- give examples of ways in which trade liberalisation has gender impacts
- start to identify ways of influencing the trade policy environment
- identify factors that may shape the trade policy environment in the future.

References

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