

# TRADE AND EMPLOYMENT CHALLENGES FOR POLICY RESEARCH

This study is the outcome of collaborative research between the Secretariat of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Labour Office (ILO). It addresses an issue that is of concern to both organizations: the relationship between trade and employment.

On the basis of an overview of the existing academic literature, the study provides an impartial view of what can be said, and with what degree of confidence, on the relationship between trade and employment, an often contentious issue of public debate. Its focus is on the connections between trade policies, and labour and social policies and it will be useful for all those who are interested in this debate: academics and policy-makers, workers and employers, trade and labour specialists.

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A joint study of the International Labour Office  
and the Secretariat of the World Trade Organization



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## CHALLENGES FOR POLICY RESEARCH

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## FOREWORD

This study is the outcome of collaborative research between the Secretariat of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Labour Office (ILO). It addresses an issue that is of important concern to both organizations, that is, the relationship between trade and employment.

The multilateral trading system has the potential to contribute to increasing global welfare and to promote better employment outcomes. The challenge all our Members face is to find ways of realizing this potential as fully as possible. A first step in that direction is to improve our understanding of how trade and labour markets interact and affect the lives of millions around the world.

We consider this joint study undertaken by the ILO and the Secretariat of the WTO a useful and timely initiative that will promote greater understanding and assist governments in making decisions in an increasingly complex and fast-changing environment. In joining the expertise of the two Secretariats, this technical study aims to provide a broad and impartial view of what can be said – and with what degree of confidence – about the relationship between trade and employment, and the way in which trade policies and labour market policies affect this relationship. The study also identifies questions that are not always well understood in the literature, and on which more research would be useful.

We are therefore pleased to present this study as an encouraging illustration of how useful collaboration can be developed between the two Secretariats on issues of common interest.

Pascal Lamy

WTO Director-General

Juan Somavia

ILO Director-General

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