

# Trade and Climate Change

WTO-UNEP Report



United Nations Environment Programme



WORLD TRADE  
ORGANIZATION

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# Trade and Climate Change

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A report by the United Nations Environment  
Programme and the World Trade Organization

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# Foreword

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Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing the international community. Mitigating global warming and adapting to its consequences will require major economic investment and, above all, unequivocal determination on the part of policy-makers. With a challenge of this magnitude, multilateral cooperation is crucial, and a successful conclusion to the ongoing global negotiations on climate change would be the first step towards achieving sustainable development for future generations. As we march towards Copenhagen, we all have a responsibility to make a success of these negotiations. Climate change is not a problem that can afford to wait. It is a threat to future development, peace and prosperity that must be tackled with the greatest sense of urgency by the entire community of nations.

The WTO and UNEP are partners in the pursuit of sustainable development. As the principal UN agency for the protection of the environment, UNEP has years of experience in the field of climate change. The WTO has also launched its first ever trade and environment negotiation under the Doha Development Agenda. Certain climate change mitigation measures intersect with existing WTO rules and recent discussions in various fora have brought to the fore the importance of better understanding the various linkages between trade and climate change.

This report is the outcome of collaborative research between the WTO Secretariat and UNEP. It reviews how trade and climate change policies interact and how they can be mutually supportive. The aim is to promote greater understanding of this interaction and to assist policy-makers in this complex policy area. The report uniquely examines the intersection between trade and climate change from four different but correlated perspectives: the science of climate change; trade theory; multilateral efforts to tackle climate change; and national climate change policies and their effect on trade. The report underlines that, as a critical first step, governments must urgently seal a scientifically-credible and equitable deal in Copenhagen: one that addresses the need for both significant emission reductions and adaptation for vulnerable economies and communities. Moreover, it highlights that there is considerable scope and flexibility under WTO rules for addressing climate change at the national level, and that mitigation measures should be designed and implemented in a manner that ensures that trade and climate policies are mutually supportive.

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