

Editorial



On 22 February this year, the World Trade Organization (WTO) announced that its historic Trade Facilitation Agreement had entered into force following its ratification by two-thirds of the WTO's 164 members. In doing so, the WTO Director-General, HE Ambassador Roberto Azevêdo, declared that it is now time to begin the work of turning the potential benefits of the Agreement into reality.

The Director-General has previously publicly acknowledged the work of the International Network of Customs Universities (INCU) in developing and promoting the Agreement, including the development of the first version of the WTO Trade Facilitation Self-Assessment Guide in 2007. This guide was used by approximately 100 developing and least developed countries to assess their trade facilitation needs and priorities, which enabled them to participate more effectively

in the WTO Trade Facilitation negotiations.

Recognising the importance of trade facilitation to global economic growth, the resolution of the INCU on the future direction of the organisation (Baku, 23 May 2014) determined that the organisation would support the work of the WTO Committee on Trade Facilitation through a range of initiatives, including empirical studies to help inform decision-making. I would therefore once again encourage both academic and practitioner contributors to submit articles for publication in future editions of the *World Customs Journal* that support implementation of the Agreement, including ways to maximise the benefits for developing and least developed countries. As noted by the Director-General, 'Now, working together, we have the responsibility to implement the Agreement and make those benefits a reality'.

The Editorial Board congratulates the WTO on this important achievement, and supports the Director-General's view that the Trade Facilitation Agreement represents the most significant reform of global trade this century.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'D. Widdowson'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning.

David Widdowson
Editor-in-Chief