

WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION AND ITS ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE:

Introduction:

This paper calls for the meaning of international trade, a look at the international organisation known as World Trade Organisation and its role as far as international trade is concerned.

International Trade.

International trade may be defined as a contract of buying and selling goods and services entered into between parties whose places of business are in different countries or trade in goods and services that cut across international borders or boundaries or between nationals of different countries. This involves imports from one country to another and or exports to one country from another country or trans boundary trade. An international sale or export trade contract can also be described as an agreement for the sale and delivery of goods across international borders or boundaries and for all other things incidental to it.

➤ **Five essentials of such international trade are:**

- A contract of sale of goods.
- A contract of carriage of goods.
- The contract of insurance for the goods.
- The compliance with formalities and documentation requirements stipulated by the exports and imports' authorities.
- The mechanism for payment set up by the buyer.

Since no nation can produce all it needs by itself alone, international trade has become not only a means by which nations source those goods and services they lack or do not have in sufficient quantities but also a subject of international politics either for achieving, promoting or maintaining peace between international trading partners or countries and a source of national insecurity as a result of external developments in countries with which it inter-dependes or depends on for essential products and sometimes wars are fought to preserve that national security. For instance it has been argued that one of the reasons for US' going into the Gulf Wars on the side of Kuwait against Iraq was US' intention to preserve the vulnerability (weakness) of its economy to oil crisis if it is cut off from oil purchases from the Gulf by the hostile Iraq that had annexed the oil-rich portions of Kuwait.

➤ The Role of WTO:

The role of WTO in international trade is as stipulated in the Agreement establishing it and includes:

1. facilitating the implementation, administration and operation and furthering the objectives of the agreement establishing it and other Multilateral Trade Agreements and providing the framework for the implementation, administration and operation of the Plurality Trade Agreements,
2. Providing the forum for negotiations among its Members concerning their multilateral trade relations in matters dealt with under the agreements in the Annexes to the Agreement setting it up and for the results of such negotiations as may be decided by the Ministerial Conference,
3. Administering the Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes or the Dispute Settlement Understanding which is Annex 2 to the agreement setting it up,
4. Administering the Trade Policy Review Mechanism in Annex 3 of the agreement setting it up, and
5. Cooperating as appropriate with the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development [the World Bank] with a view to achieving greater coherence in global economic policy making.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AOSA	Association of Official Seed Analysts
AOSCA	Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GPA	Global Plan of Action
IP	Identity Preserved
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
ISF	International Seed Federation
ISTA	International Seed Testing Association
MLS	Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-Sharing
NDA	National Designated Authority
OAPI	Organisation africaine de la propriété intellectuelle
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIC	Orange International Seed Lot Certificate
PGRFA	Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
QA	Quality Assurance
QDS	Quality Declared Seed
RPPO	Regional Plant Protection Organization
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SMTA	Standard Material Transfer Agreement
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
TRIPS	Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
UPOV	International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants
WTO	World Trade Organization

OECD- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

The OECD Schemes for the Varietal Certification or Controlling of Seed traded internationally was established in 1958. Membership is open to OECD, UN and WTO countries, and there are currently 61 member countries. The principal aim of all eight Seed Schemes in place is to encourage the production and use of high quality seed. Each Scheme is defined according to a group of species of cultivated plants; at present, 200 agricultural and vegetable species are covered..

The OECD Schemes for the Varietal Certification or the Control of Seed Moving in International Trade include [Rules and Regulations](#) applicable to eight groups of species constituting the following Schemes:

- Grasses and Legumes
- Crucifers and other Oil or Fibre species
- Cereals
- Maize
- Sorghum
- Sugar and Fodder Beet
- Subterranean clover and similar species
- Vegetables.

The OECD is known for its evidence-based advice and standards, as well as for being a forum where national experts from different areas can meet and jointly develop common standards and procedures. This and the involvement of highly qualified seed experts in the standard setting process ensure the wide acceptance of the OECD seed varietal certification system, and its value to the global seed and agricultural sectors.

I. INTRODUCTION

- World population will increase from 6.9 billion in 2010 to 9.3 billion people in 2050; and agriculture will play a fundamental role in meeting the world's growing demand for food, feed and fibre. In order to feed the world population in 2050, agricultural production will have to almost double, and most of the incremental output will have to come from increases in yields (FAO, 2009).¹
- High-quality seed is a pre-requisite to achieve maximum outputs and good returns for farmers.
- To strengthen the seed sector, it is crucial that seed growers and companies adhere to policies that guarantee quality standards and appropriate regulatory features. Many countries have adopted seed laws.
- A number of international organisations, conventions and treaties deal with the regulation of seed trade, ranging from access to delivery of quality seeds to growers. Together they provide an international regulatory framework by overseeing the interests of breeders, producers and consumers. Among these organisations are the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), whose Seed Schemes are globally recognized for the certification of seed moving in international trade.
- International regulatory framework for related aspects of seed trade, including plant health and phytosanitary measures, access and benefit-sharing for plant germplasm and use of pesticides..

- An appropriate regulatory framework helps to promote competitive seed markets and lowers barriers to trade. Special attention is paid to the OECD Seed Schemes and their contribution to the development of an international seed certification framework as well as their links to other international organizations.
- The plan aims to further strengthen the work of the Schemes and its value to Member countries.
- This document is intended as an information document for policy-makers in Member countries of the OECD Seed Schemes and in countries interested in joining the Schemes.

The OECD Seed Schemes: A globally recognized seed certification system

1. The OECD Seed Schemes provide an international framework for the certification of seed. They aim to facilitate seed trade by reducing technical barriers, improving transparency and lowering transactions costs.
2. The Seed Schemes authorise the use of labels and certificates for seed produced and processed for international trade according to agreed principles. One of the main principles is that OECD certification is applied only to those varieties that are officially recognised as distinct and having an acceptable value in at least one participating country.
3. An OECD list of varieties eligible for seed certification is regularly published and available online and in hard copy. For a country to use the OECD labels, it is required to register the species and varieties in the OECD list of varieties. The list contains most internationally traded varieties, and it has grown progressively over the last 30 years. There are currently 49 899 varieties and 200 species listed.
4. The rules of the Seed Schemes cover seven groups of species, constituting seven distinct and independent Schemes. In response to the needs of Member countries, the rules are regularly amended.
5. In order for a country to participate in the OECD Seed Schemes, several criteria must be met: The country must provide a description of the national seed certification scheme and a copy of the national rules and procedures governing variety registration and seed certification.
