

GLOBAL SYSTEM OF TRADE PREFERENCES AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (GSTP)

GSTP/CP/SS/U16/1
30 October 2025

Committee of Participants
Special Session at Ministerial Level
22 October 2025, Geneva, Switzerland

GSTP Ministerial Meeting

Joint Communiqué¹

1. We, the Ministers and senior officials of the Parties to the Agreement on the Global System of Trade Preferences among Developing Countries (GSTP), met in Geneva, Switzerland, on 22 October 2025 on the occasion of the sixteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to take stock of the operation of the GSTP and examine the way forward to strengthen its potential to boost South-South trade.

2. Since our last meeting in Doha, Qatar, in 2012, during the occasion of the thirteenth session of UNCTAD, the global economy and the multilateral trading system have experienced major challenges. We meet in increasingly uncertain times, when the state of the world is a cause for mounting concern for member states. Heightened trade tensions and multiple global crises have strained our capacity to pursue sustained and inclusive economic growth. In addition, geopolitical tensions and the rise of unilateralism have undermined our ability to take decisive actions to pursue trade-led growth strategy under the rules-based multilateral trading system.

3. Amid growing trade uncertainty, trade among developing countries, or South-South trade, represents a promising economic opportunity to build resilience through diversification and strengthen our economies. These opportunities should be actively harnessed to safeguard our shared development goals.

4. We reiterate the importance of the GSTP as a common platform for inter-regional South-South trade cooperation. Through this partnership, we seek to create conditions necessary for our economies to harness the benefits from dynamic South-South trade for inclusive and sustainable development. We are convinced that, by injecting a further impetus to South-South cooperation, this will contribute to the growth and resilience of world trade.

5. The successful conclusion of the São Paulo Round in 2010 marked a major milestone in the history of South-South trade cooperation. We acknowledge ongoing efforts and progress in technical work to prepare for the Protocol's entry into force and emphasize the need to consider current trade dynamics and members' policies to ensure effective and inclusive implementation.

6. Going forward, we will endeavour to enhance the value of the GSTP for our economies and deepen South-South trade cooperation and solidarity. The possible areas of future cooperation may include tariffs and para-tariffs, non-tariff measures, direct trade measures and sectoral agreements in accordance with Article 4 of the GSTP Agreement. We welcome analytical work conducted to date to support this endeavour and encourage structured monitoring and evaluation of the Agreement, as well as targeted technical assistance aimed at facilitating the integration of participating countries into global value chains. We recognize the special needs of the least developed country (LDC) Participants and the need to provide

concrete preferential measures in their favour in accordance with Article 17 of the GSTP Agreement.

7. We note the importance of enhancing financial and technical resources available through voluntary contributions to the GSTP trust fund. This is essential to ensuring predictability of finance and the long-term sustainability of relevant activities, and to enable the UNCTAD secretariat to support GSTP operations with greater effectiveness and stability.

8. We avail ourselves of this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General of UNCTAD and the UNCTAD secretariat for continuous support of our endeavours to further enhance cooperation among our economies under the GSTP.

¹ Argentina dissociates itself from the Joint Communiqué.