



Side event on the margins of the WTO TBT Committee meeting

7 March 2019, 2 - 3 p.m.

WTO, Geneva, Room E

THE UNSEEN IMPACT OF NON-TARIFF MEASURES

Insights from a new database

- UNCTAD-led NTM database improves transparency and analysis on the impact of NTMs
- Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) are the most frequent form of NTMs: 41% of all NTMs are TBT, 35% are sanitary and phytosanitary measures.

Non-tariff measures (NTMs) are an elusive class of measures that inhabit the twilight zone between trade policy and national regulation. From import licensing to technical regulations, from procurement preferences to subsidies, a large number of policies and regulations are classified as NTMs. The lack of transparency on NTMs and their variety makes them much harder to measure than tariffs.

Businesses have long identified NTMs as affecting their ability to trade. But the opacity and complexity of these measures have been impediments to the discourse on this critical issue. New data collected by UNCTAD, with many partners around the world, sheds new light on NTMs. The TRAINS database now covers 109 countries and 90% of global trade.

The joint UNCTAD-World Bank publication finds that TBT, followed by SPS measures, are the most frequent NTM globally. NTMs represent a total cost to trade of about 325 billion US dollars, with a major share being related to TBT. The average costs of NTMs tend to be higher for exporters in low income countries.

Further UNCTAD research suggests that costs related to SPS measures and TBT can be reduced by 15-25 per cent through regulatory convergence and good regulatory practice.

Moderator: José Manuel Campos Abad, Chile, Chair of the TBT Committee
Presenter: Christian Knebel, UNCTAD
Discussant: Devin McDaniels, WTO Secretariat



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