



APEC Business Advisory Council

REIWG IV 2024

WTO: State of Play

**Presentation by Anna Curzon, ABAC New Zealand
Tuesday 12 November 2024**

State of play in the WTO

- Adoption of Investment Facilitation for Development deal **still blocked** by India et al.
 - Fish 1 agreement ratifications **still lagging** (only 86 out of the 110 that will be needed)
 - Fish 2 agreement **still blocked** by India
 - **No progress** on the E-Commerce Moratorium
- Advocacy remains critical – ABAC should consider a further visit to Geneva in 2025

WTO Dispute Settlement

- At MC12 (June 2020), WTO members agreed to conduct discussions with a view to having a “fully and well-functioning dispute settlement system accessible to all members by 2024”
- Goal reaffirmed at MC13
- Consultations underway since April
- “Good progress” reported on technical work.
– but will need to accelerate to reach an outcome by December



WTO JSI on E-Commerce

- “Stabilised Text” announced in late July 2024
(see my presentation at ABAC III for detail)
- 5 APEC economies not currently participating:
 - Viet Nam and PNG not part of the negotiations
 - Indonesia, Chinese Taipei and US are undertaking domestic consultations – no update to report
- Many hurdles to a final agreement:
 - Some participants still want to negotiate details
 - India (and others) strongly object to plurilaterals, including this one – blocking incorporation into the WTO rulebook



WTO Report on Trade & Inclusiveness

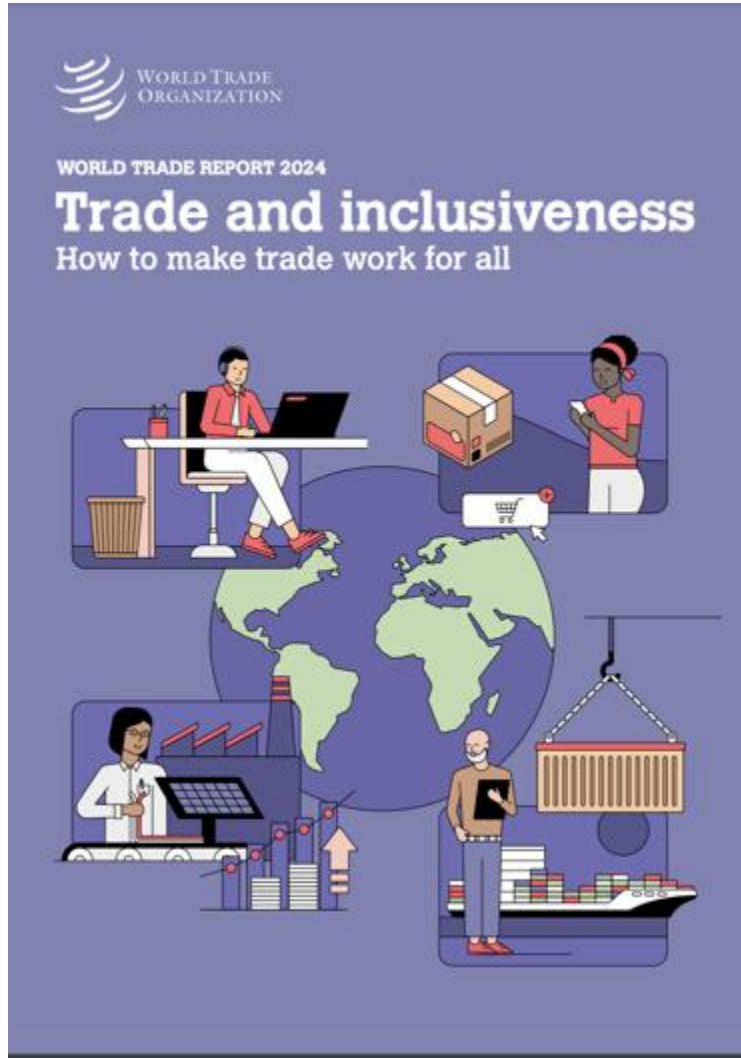
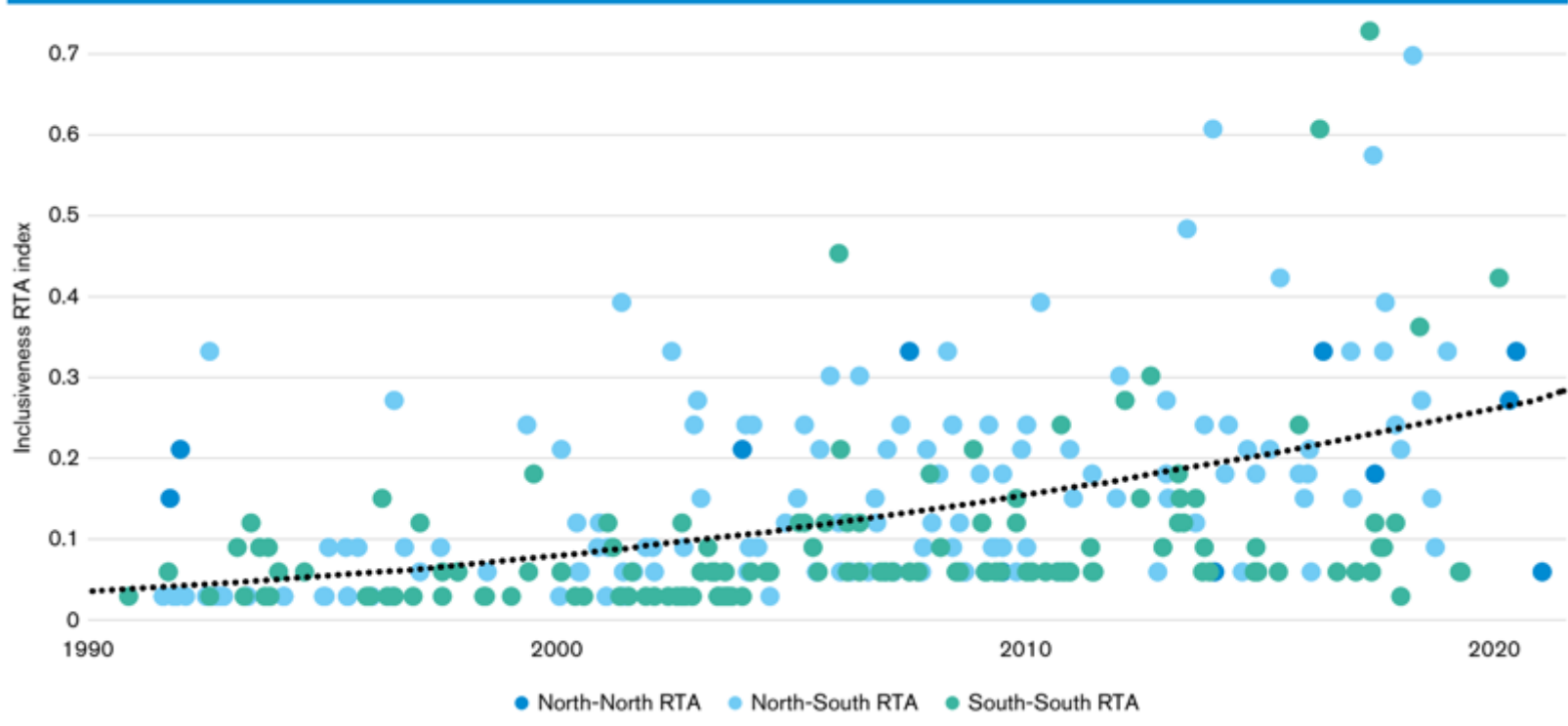


Figure D.11: Increasing numbers of provisions on inclusiveness in RTAs, 1990-2021



Mapping 33 provisions of “inclusiveness” in FTAs including human rights, workers, MSMEs, gender, Indigenous, disabled, other vulnerable groups, poverty etc.

New Services Agenda

- Detailed discussion at SOM3 (GOS Plenary, FTAAP, CTI)
- Strong interest from APEC, support for concept from OECD
- ABAC could do more work to understand the challenges and build out the proposal
 - e.g. narrow focus to specific sectors (environmental digital services?) or specific challenges (e.g. how to design effective capacity-building for MSMEs?)

➤ *A possible research project in 2025*

Recommendations

- ABAC to continue to support ambitious outcomes at the WTO (including considering a follow-up visit to Geneva in 2025)
- ABAC to continue to urge the finalisation, expansion and integration into the WTO rulebook of the WTO E-Commerce Agreement
- ABAC to consider a research project on the New Services Agenda in 2025