

Gender and Trade Coalition Third Strategy Meeting

3-4 July 2023

[The Vineyard](#), Camphor 1 Room

Colinton Road, Newlands, Cape Town 7700, South Africa

Action Minutes

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The Gender and Trade Coalition (GTC) convened its [third strategy meeting](#) from 3-4 July 2023, ahead of the 31st International Association for Feminist Economics (IAFFE) Annual Conference in Cape Town, South Africa from 5-8 July 2023. During this dynamic and reflective space, GTC members and allies honed our collective **analysis, advocacy, communications strategy, and administrative infrastructure.**

I. Analysis

Following a herstory of the GTC's analysis, advocacy, and coordination achievements since its inception in 2018, members shared updates on their gender and trade justice work, and a situational analysis of the current trade policy landscape. Proposed actions to **strengthen the GTC's analysis** include:

1. Continue developing the series of GTC **explainer articles** on gender and trade including on such topics such as:
 - a. The [WTOs work program on 'trade and gender.'](#) Countering its narrow focus on women's 'entrepreneurship' and shifting to a focus on farmers, caregivers, workers etc., countering compartmentalization of gender as a standalone chapter in trade agreements and emphasizing the need for integration of gender (and environmental) impacts throughout trade agreements. Advocating for macro policies that advance women's economic and social empowerment and reflect the development context.

- b. The [European Union's trade policy](#) towards transitioning to a green and digital economy, including securing Europe's access to critical minerals and services (e.g. energy, transport, financial services and digital communications). Analysis of how neoliberalism is pushed and institutionalized through unbalanced trade agreements and rules. Impacts on global South countries that have natural deposits of 'green energy' sources (especially Lithium).
 - c. **Climate change**, including, for example, the impact of multilateral trade rules and the proposed unilateral EU carbon border adjustment mechanism on deepening existing gender biases within the labor force, the projected loss of revenue for the global South, rising unemployment, energy crisis, etc.
 - d. **Agriculture** and food sovereignty.
 - e. **Fisheries** and marine resources.
 - f. **Migration**, labor rights, and the feminization of labor.
 - g. **Fiscal policy** issues of debt and taxation.
2. Conduct a **landscape analysis** of what states are doing at the country, regional, and global levels (e.g., analyzing WTO country reports for positions on gender and trade, gender provisions in trade agreements, etc.) Identify what is being done, where the gaps are, and how it impacts women's lives on the ground.
 3. Produce a **GTC flagship report** published alongside UNCTAD's Gender and Development Forum every four years.
 4. Convert the **GTC herstory presentation** into a video or timeline with voice over to offer newcomers an overview of our analyses and processes.
 5. Update the **GTC unity statement** through an open process with SG and GTC members.
 6. Produce **policy briefs** toward influencing specific trade negotiations.
 7. Write **articles** on critical/ topical trade issues.
 8. Create a series of **videos** on crucial trade-related issues, featuring activist stories.

II. Advocacy

The advocacy session kicked off with a creative exercise to envision a front page news headline about the GTC's work five years from now. A sampling of the headlines included:

- 'GTC appointed as a special advisory group for trade affairs to the African Union, with veto powers!'

- ‘Victory for women's rights! EU rendered powerless by TikTok disruption of trade policy!’
- ‘GTC demands lead to permanent TRIPS waiver on breast cancer medicines!’

While discussing organizing tactics, members were inspired by the idea of convening a **tribunal on trade justice** in 2027, **cross-movement organizing**, and building **feminist political economy education**. These goals are reflected in the following advocacy plan, alongside actions from local through global levels. The proposed actions to strengthen the GTC's advocacy include:

1. Engage in **global policy fora** to monitor negotiations (inside) and mobilize and build alliances (outside) including at:
 - a. WTO Public Forum (12-15 September 2023, Geneva)
 - b. [CSW68](#), given the priority theme of ‘financing with a gender perspective’ (11-22 March 2024, New York)
 - c. UNCTAD 16 and its Gender and Development Forum (2025)
 - d. UNFCCC COP 30 (November 2025, Belém do Pará)
 - e. Convene a public hearing on the gender, trade and climate nexus at UNFCCC COP 30 (November 2025, Belém do Pará).
 - f. Beijing +30 (2025)
 - g. [Financing for Development Forum](#) toward a possible fourth Financing for Development Conference (2025)
2. Connect with **allies across social movements** working on trade and other macro policy issues, including to strengthen their capacity for a gendered analysis of trade policy. For example:
 - a. Engage in the gender and tax justice forum (2024, Bogotá).
 - b. Engage in the 15th [AWID International Forum](#) (2-5 December 2024, Bangkok).
 - c. Engage with Feminists for a Binding Treaty on Business & Human Rights.
 - d. Support movements to engage members of parliament on trade policy.
 - e. Map related social movements to engage with, e.g., labor movements (including invisible labor and migrant labor).
 - f. Map state allies and experts across sectors.
3. Explore pathways for activists to **learn and exchange** feminist political economy analyses, including on gender and trade. These pathways could include:
 - a. Organizing webinars on contemporary trade issues to offer multi-regional perspectives and a feminist counter narrative to the neoliberal discourse on trade.
 - b. Creating reading, watching and listening lists to share knowledge in creative ways.
 - c. Co-creating a feminist political economy education curriculum with allied organizations.

III. Communications

Discussions on the audience, messaging, tools, and purpose of the GTC's communications strategy ran parallel to, and emerged from, developing the coalition's advocacy plan above. Proposed actions to strengthen the GTC's communications include:

1. Develop a **communications strategy** from local through global levels, using colloquial rather than technical language, by:
 - a. Enhancing the **GTC's Twitter engagement** and potentially expanding social media presence to other platforms, including Facebook and YouTube.
 - b. Following Twitter conversations on contemporary trade issues.
 - c. Exploring the possibility of a **podcast series** featuring activists and experts.
 - d. Incorporating art and other **visual mediums** to convey complex ideas.
 - e. Experimenting with the use of social media platforms (e.g., TikTok) to disrupt neoliberal trade discourses.

2. Improve **engagement with and between Coalition members** by:
 - a. Updating GTC members through a **quarterly newsletter** sent by each call chair.
 - b. Convening an open, **virtual annual meeting** for members instead of creating yet another open Google Group.
 - c. **Mapping the trade related issues members work on**, especially engagement with movements, and categorizing members by area of expertise.
 - d. **Feature stories of members'** trade justice related work in the newsletter and on the website.
 - e. Offer GTC members the opportunity to step up their engagement and become a **'friend of GTC.'**

IV. Administration

The two administrative issues we discussed included: (a) the GTC's **governance** structure, including the strength of the steering group (SG), engagement with the 'friends of GTC,' and division of labor among the co-chairs; and (b), **funding** opportunities and approaches.

1. The current **steering group** consists of fifteen members elected for a three year term, from 2022-2025. Twelve have been relatively active and three relatively inactive, though all were engaged in the UNCTAD 15 inaugural Gender and Development Forum and eight GTC-convened webinars during the height of COVID-19. The **'friends of GTC'** comprise 17 individuals, many of whom have actively engaged with GTC.
 - a. Contact inactive SG members regarding their participation.
 - b. Invite members to become 'friends of GTC.'

2. Three **co-chairs** were elected for a three year term from 2022-2025, with the following division of labor distributing three core administrative tasks: coordination (serving as Secretariat), communications, and advocacy.
 - a. Acknowledge that Regions Refocus is handling the lion's share of the tasks listed below, FEMNET has yet to fulfill their communications tasks (though they intend to), and the Latin America Gender and Trade Network has yet to commit to co-chairing responsibilities.
 - b. Convene a co-chairs meeting to review the respective commitments and responsibilities for a fairer division of labor to better serve the Coalition moving forward.

3. Develop detailed TORs for the co-chairs drawing on the tasks detailed below, which are culled from the opening presentation by Regions Refocus on a herstory of the GTC.
 - a. **Coordination/ Secretariat**
 - i. Manage the GTC's **internal communications systems** (e.g., Google Groups, Google Drive, SG calls)
 - Update the SG and friends of GTC Google Groups.
 - Update the shared Google folder (e.g., edit, format, and file minutes, concept notes for advocacy events, and outputs, including calls to action, articles, explainers, videos, etc.).
 - Maintain the SG call rotation schedule and support incoming chairs with materials and processes as needed.
 - Respond to the SG's queries and animate less active members.

 - ii. Oversee implementation of the GTC's **governance structure**
 - Manage the SG elections process, for agreement by quorum.
 - Update the governance structure as needed, for agreement by quorum.
 - Coordinate the GTC co-chairs.

 - iii. Coordinate the GTC's annual **strategy meetings** (in person or virtual)
 - Draft a concept note, agenda, and methodology for review and input from SG members and friends of GTC before editing and finalizing.
 - Program the substantive and administrative agenda items for discussion (e.g., proposing a framework for each session, securing speakers and facilitators, and coordinating inputs.)
 - Secure funds (as possible) for SG participation, meeting venue, meals, documentation, and ground transportation.
 - Liaise with the venue re: logistical, technological, and dietary needs.
 - Prepare a participant packet including agenda, participant list, content for discussion (e.g. draft explainers), and logistical information.
 - Draft an outcome report with an action plan.

- iv. Coordinate the GTC's **analytical outputs**
 - Edit written outputs produced by members (e.g. open letters and public statements).
 - Conceptualise, draft, and/or edit written outputs with co-producers (e.g., explainer articles).
 - Coordinate the publishing of the GTC's outputs.
 - Conceptualise and produce videos drawing on existing footage or filming new material.
 - v. Oversee our **funding strategy**
 - Follow up with potential donors.
 - Draft and/or edit proposals, reports, and correspondence with existing donors, in coordination with co-chairs and/or SG members involved in fundraising.
- b. **Communications**
- i. Grow the GTC's **social media presence** (currently just Twitter), sharing routine updates with GTC members, track and share the coalition's engagement with external events, and amplify work of our members.
 - ii. Communicate with the **membership**, including by:
 - Managing correspondence on the general **membership email list**.
 - Drafting and sending updates to the GTC members on behalf of the SG.
 - Managing the membership list (e.g., deduplicate multiple endorsements from an organization and move individual signatories to a separate list.)
 - iii. Maintain the GTC's website and plan the overhaul of our **identity and website design**.
- c. **Advocacy**
- i. Keep an eye on **engagement in policy spaces** and propose platforms for the GTC's engagement.
 - ii. Plan and coordinate GTC participation in trade-related platforms and side events and shape the intellectual contribution with member expertise.
 - iii. Collate GTC **advocacy output** for the website.
 - iv. **Recruit** members and 'friends of GTC.'
4. Develop a **funding strategy** to support our coordination, communications, analysis, and advocacy costs.
- a. Explore **potential funders**:
 - i. Organize a meeting with the Alliance for Feminist Movements (including FJS, Hewlett, Ford, etc.) to push forward a proposal as a consortium.

- ii. Explore other funders, like Wellspring and bilaterals, with SG members who have previously engaged with them to avoid presenting the GTC as a new, non-registered entity.
- b. Explore various **fundraising models**, for example:
 - i. A lead organization receives the funds and allocates sub-grants to fellow organizations based on an agreed sharing of the workload with joint reporting to the donor;
 - ii. Each organization receives funds and has a coordinator to liaise between them and monitor responsibilities with separate (not joint) reporting;
 - iii. Explore the ‘money follows function’ method by creating tasks with a coordinator to delegate the work based on members’ expertise.
- c. Change GTC’s **narrative to donors** from a focus on gender and trade justice to:
 - i. Building and sustaining feminist movements in defense of multilateralism, challenging the corporate capture of global governance, upholding the primacy of the UN and its human rights mechanisms over trade and investment agreements, etc.
 - ii. Emphasizing UN bodies such as UNCTAD and its Gender and Development Forum.
 - iii. Proposing a tribunal in 2027 and/or hearings in 2025 at COP 30 that will interlink gender, trade and climate justice as a feminist cross-movement learning space, including by building alliances and solidarity with unions, farmers, urban poor, grassroots and indigenous peoples.

V. Attendees

1. Wangari Kinoti, **ActionAid International**
2. Memory Kachambwa, **African Women's Development and Communication Network**
3. Michelle Maziwisa, **African Women's Development and Communication Network**
4. Ruth Nyambura, **African Ecofeminist Collective**
5. Wardarina, **Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law, and Development**
6. Hien Nguyen Thi, **Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law, and Development**
7. Faye Macheke, **Association for Women's Rights in Development**
8. Âurea Mouzinho, **Global Alliance for Tax Justice**
9. Diyana Yahaya, **Friend of GTC**
10. Mariama Williams, **Integrated Policy Research Institute** (virtual)
11. Crystal Simeoni, **Nawi–Afrifem Macroeconomics Collective**
12. Fatimah Kelleher, **Nawi–Afrifem Macroeconomics Collective**
13. Maureen Penjueli, **Pacific Network on Globalisation** (virtual)
14. Senani Dehigolla, **Regions Refocus**
15. Anita Nayar, **Regions Refocus**

16. Donna Andrews, **Southern Africa Rural Women's Assembly**
17. Chantal Umuhoza, **SPECTRA: Young Feminists Activism**, Rwanda (virtual)
18. Pauline Vande-Pallen, **Third World Network-Africa** (virtual)
19. Ranja Sengupta, **Third World Network** (virtual)
20. Edme Dominguez, **WIDE+**
21. Gea Meijers, **WIDE+** (virtual)
22. Carol Barton, **Women in Migration Network**
23. Lebohang Liepollo Pheko, **Women in Migration Network**