Each year, the World Trade Organization organises the Public Forum which provides a platform for public debate and discussion across a wide range of trade issues. The WTO Public Forum has become one of the most important platforms for dialogue between the stakeholders of the WTO. Over the years, more than 8,000 representatives from NGOs, civil society, academia, business, the media, governments, parliamentarians and inter-governmental organizations have attended the Public Forum.

The 2013 Public Forum will be held in Geneva from 1 to 3 October and the theme is: "Expanding Trade through Innovation and the Digital Economy".

Technology is changing the world economy. Innovation and new technologies are important drivers of economic growth and job creation. Trade can foster innovation, leading to the dissemination of technology and underpinning high-tech expansion.

Information and communication technology (ICT) is often central to the promotion of greater innovation in business, research and development programmes. Developing countries have a larger share in the global trade of ICT products, and some have used ICT as a tool to become key players in other areas. The WTO’s 1996 Information Technology Agreement (ITA) has been a catalyst in the expansion of trade in ICT products. Over the past 15 years, world exports of IT products have almost tripled in value, reaching an estimated US$ 1.4 trillion in 2010, accounting for 9.5% of world merchandise trade. Together, ITA participants account for 96% of world trade in IT products.

Similarly, new tools and technologies have changed the traditional way of doing business and have led to the development of an entirely new, digitalised economy. In the digital or internet economy, producers and consumers have significantly changed behaviour, transforming entire business sectors. The digital economy goes beyond the traditional concept of e-commerce: it is also about e-travel, e-entertainment, e-government and e-education.

Innovation, the digital economy and the development of new technology products and services have also given rise to questions and issues in areas such as security, intellectual property, environment, dissemination of technology, privacy, trade facilitation, trade in energy and medical innovation.
Has technological innovation changed the way we trade, and if so, how? Has trade helped countries to innovate? How can innovation enhance trading capacities of developing countries? How can trade keep up with the rapid evolution of technology?

The 2013 Public Forum will examine all of these issues. Discussions will focus on the following core themes:

- Innovation and Trade
- The Digital Economy
- Greening the Economy; what role for innovation?
- Technology, a tool for trade development
- Trade and Energy

**Programme highlights**

**Plenary Debates**

The Forum will begin on 1 October at 9:30 by a keynote speech, to be followed by the Opening Plenary Debate, in which high-level speakers will consider the question: “How can innovation foster growth and trade?”

The second Plenary Debate will be held on 2 October from 10:00 to 12:00. Speakers focus on the role of business and on the innovative approaches companies have taken in their international activities. Speakers from the private sector will share their perspectives on whether open trade and innovation mutually reinforce one another.

The third Plenary Debate will be held on 3 October, from 10:00 to 12:00, and is dedicated to the digital economy.

**Working sessions or workshops**

Organisers can choose to organize either working sessions or workshops.

These sessions provide a more specific insight into a particular issue. The discussion can be more technical and may involve experts, professionals and opinion leaders. Workshops are different from working sessions. Working sessions will have a traditional format, with a panel exchanging views with a moderator and taking questions from the audience while workshops will take the form of informal brainstorming sessions. There will be no working sessions or workshops during the Plenary Sessions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tuesday 1 October</th>
<th>Wednesday 2 October</th>
<th>Thursday 3 October</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:30 – 10:00 Keynote speech</td>
<td>10:00 – 12:00 Plenary Session</td>
<td>10:00 – 12:00 Plenary Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 – 12:00 Opening Plenary Session</td>
<td>12:00 – 13:00 Break</td>
<td>12:00 – 13:00 Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:00 – 17:00 Working sessions or workshops</td>
<td>13:00 – 17:00 Working sessions or workshops</td>
<td>13:00 – 17:00 Working sessions or workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:30 – 20:15 Reception</td>
<td>End</td>
<td>End</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Keeping up to date with the Public Forum

Regular updates will be posted on the WTO website and on social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) as the event unfolds.

A wide selection of photos from the Forum will be made available on the WTO website and on Flickr.

Public Forum TV – "120 seconds to talk": During the forum, you will have the opportunity to record a two-minute video message in response to the question: “Can we have better trade through innovation?” Your responses will be streamed on social media sites. The best messages will be posted on the WTO website.