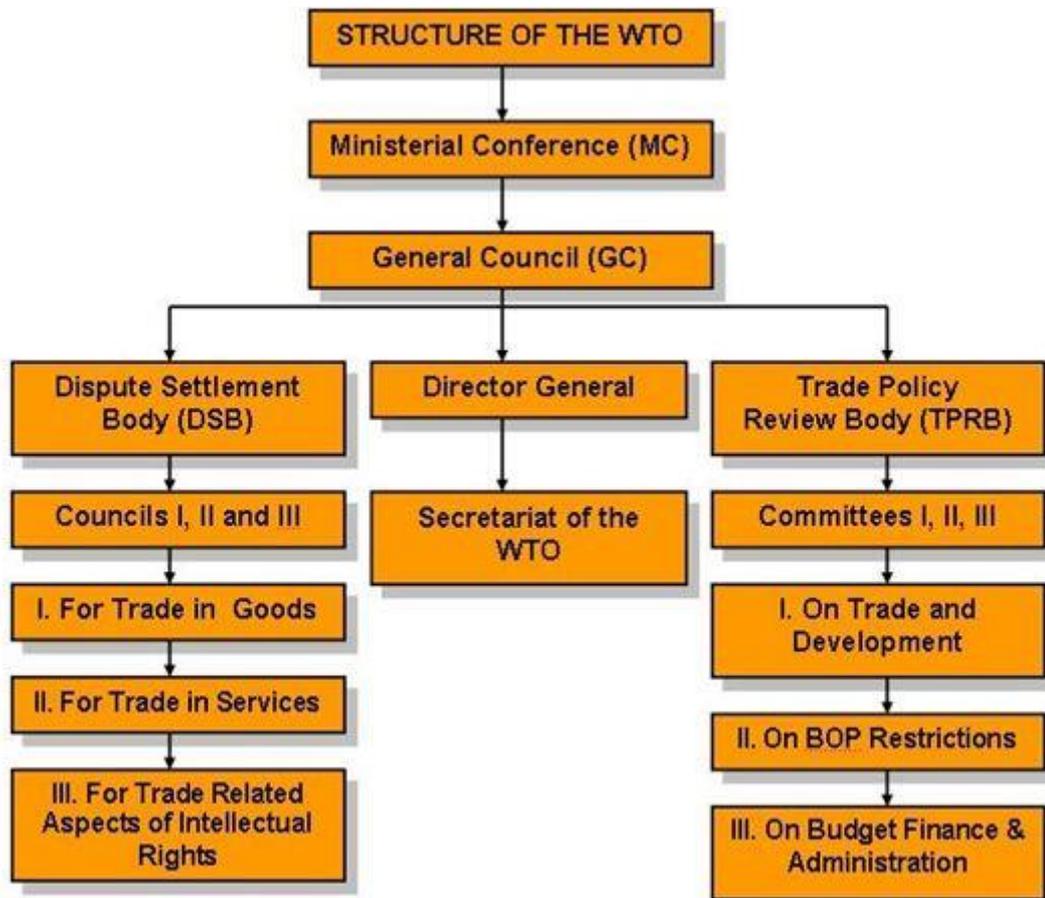


FIRST WOMAN AND FIRST AFRICAN HEAD OF WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

TAGS: GS-2: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT:

- Nigeria's Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala was appointed as the **first female and first African head** of the beleaguered World Trade Organization (WTO).



NEWS IN DETAILS:

- **Virtual special General Council meeting:** The WTO called a virtual special General Council meeting at which **member states officially selected Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala**, the former Nigerian Finance Minister and World Bank veteran **as the global trade body's new Director-General**.
- **Tenure:** She will take up her post **on March 1, 2021** and her term, which is renewable, will run **until August 31, 2025**.
- **Leaderless since Aug 2020:** The Geneva-based WTO has been leaderless since Brazilian career diplomat Roberto Azevedo stepped down last August 2020, a year ahead of schedule.
- **Seventh Director:** Okonjo-Iweala becomes the organisation's **seventh director-general** since its creation in **1995**.

CHALLENGES TO WTO:

- She said a **stronger WTO** would be vital for the **global COVID-19 recovery**.
- **Paralysed institution:** The near-paralysed institution desperately **needs a kick-start** — something Ms. Okonjo-Iweala immediately addressed after being confirmed in the job.

- "A strong WTO is vital if we are to recover fully and rapidly from the devastation wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic."
- Our organisation faces a **great many challenges** but working together we can **collectively make the WTO stronger, more agile and better adapted** to the realities of today."

WTO APPOINTMENT:

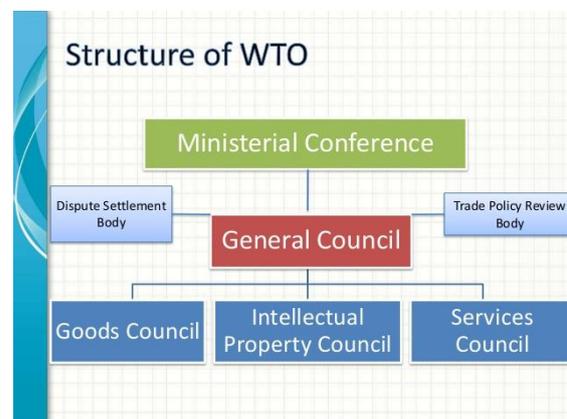
- **Consensus-finding process:** The **164-member organisation** appoints its leaders through a consensus-finding process.

ROLE OF USA IN WTO APPOINTMENT:

- **Trump Block:** The eight candidates were meant to have been whittled down to one by November, but former US president Donald Trump's administration stood alone in blocking the consensus around Okonjo-Iweala.
- **Biden Support:** South Korean Trade Minister Yoo Myung-hee, the last rival standing, pulled out on February 5 as it became clear that new US **President Joe Biden was swinging behind Okonjo-Iweala.**
- "The United States is eager to work with Dr. Okonjo-Iweala **to ensure this institution lives up to its full potential** as a body that **promotes equitable economic growth through trade.**"

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

- **Trade body:** WTO is the **only international organization** dealing with the **rules of trade between nations.**
- **Foundation:** It came into being in **1995.**
- **Successor of GATT:** it is the successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).
- **HQ:** Geneva
- **Members: 164,** India is a founding member of WTO.
- **Function:** To ensure that trade flows as smoothly, predictably and freely as possible
- **Consensus Decision Making:** All decisions in the WTO are taken by consensus among all



member countries.

- **WTO's dispute settlement:** To Settle trade disputes between member Nations

SOURCE: THE HINDU

MCQs:

Q. Consider the following statements regarding World Trade Organization.

1. It is the only international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations.
2. Nigeria's Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala was appointed as the first female and first African head of the World Trade Organization.
3. All decisions in the WTO are taken by two third consensus.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 and 2 Only

b) 2 and 3 Only

c) 2 Only

d) 1, 2 and 3

ANS: A