

# WTO reforms plagued by obstacles

Trade ministers from some 160 member countries are gathered in Abu Dhabi for the World Trade Organization's biennial meeting amid issues that threaten global trade and economic growth



Global fish stocks under threat\*

▲ Juvenile yellow fin tuna

6%

60% sustainably fished

34% overfished

Could catch more

Fish stocks safe

Fish stocks in decline



WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

■ **Digital trade:** Maintain 1998 ban on tariffs on digital goods and data transmissions. Ban opposed by India, South Africa and Indonesia

■ **Dispute settlement:** Most members want WTO **Appellate Body** – which decides trade disputes between member countries – reinstated after it was effectively killed in 2019 by Trump administration



■ **Fisheries Funding Mechanism:** Ban government funding of **US\$35bn** per year to support fish stocks



■ **Food security:** India wants its anti-hunger programme permanently protected against challenges that it violates cap on trade-distorting farm subsidies

■ **Patent waivers:** South Africa, India and other developing countries want to waive intellectual property protections for Covid-19 therapeutics and diagnostics. Move fiercely opposed by U.S. pharmaceutical industry



\*UN's most recent status of world's fish stocks (1974 to 2017)

Sources: Our World in Data, Politico, Reuters

Picture: Getty Images

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