



FORUM: Economic and Financial Committee (GA2)

TOPIC: Assessing the Impact of the Current US administration's Tariffs in Global Sustainable Trade

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POSITION: Co-chair

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates,

My name is Maria Nefeli Theodoni and I will be your co-chair. I am 18 years old and I am studying chemistry at UoA. This will be my third time chairing and my second time at AMLMUN. I am super excited to meet you all and I am sure that we will have a fruitful debate. Feel free to contact me with any questions both during and leading up to the conference.

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TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Since the end of World War II, the United States have been the world's predominant economic power and thus has had a major role in global trade and has been a leader in global economic policy. During this time the United States policy regarding global trade had been, for the most part, non-interventionist. In recent years the deterioration of industry as well as the development of a consumer economy has led to the United States running a trade deficit with most countries. Since Trump's inauguration in 2025 the United States' government has shifted their economic policy in order to address this phenomenon. Their recent change in approach has the stated goals of using tariffs as leverage in order to reach a more favorable trade partnership. At the same time the current US Administration has used tariffs in their economic feud with China as a tool to put more economic pressure on them as well as return production of goods to the United States.

This sudden shift has caused trouble in global trade. The unrest is further exacerbated by the Current Administration's tactic of discarding already agreed upon deals as well as by internal ongoing legal battles within the United States that put into question the validity of the tariffs. The ones most affected by the sudden changes have been the US's closest trading partners such as Canada, Mexico, Japan, the United Kingdom and the European Union whose economies rely on the United States as the largest consumer on the Globe. The United Nations is called upon to assess the economic impact of the tariffs. The situation is fickle since the United Nations have to both respect the United States' ability to dictate their economic policy while also making sure that weaker

nations are not being taken advantage of as well as making sure that the global economy remains healthy. As of July 2026, the situation is ongoing with the United States making new additions to their tariff policy.



Sustainability in Trade Finance¹

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Biodiversity

“The existence of a large number of different kinds of animals and plants which make a balanced environment.”²

Corporation

“An organization or a group of organizations that is recognized by law as a single unit.”³

Export

“The selling and transporting of goods to another country.”⁴

¹ LinkedIn article, Sustainability in Trade Finance: Leveraging Digital Solutions, Dr. Ari Aaltonen, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/sustainability-trade-finance-leveraging-digital-dr-ari-aaltonen-b4o9f/> / Accessed 22 August 2026

² Definition of biodiversity noun from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/biodiversity?q=biodiversity/> / Accessed 28 July

³ Definition of corporation noun from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/corporation?q=corporations/> / Accessed 28 July

⁴ Definition of export noun from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/export_1?q=export/ / Accessed 24 July

Supply chain

“The series of processes involved in the production and supply of goods, from when they are first made, grown, etc. until they are bought or used.”⁵

Sustainable

“Involving the use of natural products and energy in a way that does not harm the environment.”⁶

Tariff

“A tax that is paid on goods coming into or going out of a country.”⁷

Tariff Barriers

“A barrier to trade between certain countries or geographical areas which takes the form of abnormally high taxes levied by a government on imports or occasionally exports for purposes of protection, support of the balance of payments, or the raising of revenue”⁸

Trade Deficit

“A situation in which the value of a country’s imports is greater than the value of its exports.”⁹

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Introduction to Sustainable Trade

Sustainable Trade is the exchange of goods and services in a way that generates economic growth while protecting the environment, supporting fair labor and human rights, and reducing social inequality. Its key pillars are environmental responsibility, social equality and human rights and economic viability. All those are essential criteria for a trade to justify as sustainable and are a great part of today's world's views for future trade.

⁵ Definition of supply chain noun from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/supply-chain?q=supply+chains/> / Accessed 28 July

⁶ Definition of sustainable adjective from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, [https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/sustainable?q=sustainable+ /](https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/sustainable?q=sustainable+/) Accessed 23 July

⁷ Definition of *tariff* noun from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/tariff?q=tariff/> / Accessed 23 July

⁸ Definition of trade deficit noun from the Collins English Dictionary, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/tariff-barriers/> / Accessed 28 July

⁹ Definition of trade deficit noun from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/trade-deficit?q=trade+deficit/> / Accessed 24 July



Sustainable trade relies on the unity of all World Nations and their continuous efforts to protect the environment as well as their people, through agreements and immediate action.

Sustainable Practices in Import-Export: Eco-Friendly Trade¹⁰

Environmental responsibility

This part of sustainable trade ensures that worldwide trade is conducted with respect for the environment and eco-friendly measures. It is crucial because it tackles a great problem of today's world which is the ecological distraction that has been caused by humankind. Some of the problems that it addresses are resource preservation and biodiversity and lowering the percentage of greenhouse gases that are caused from global trade through goods' transportation and production.

As of the resource preservation and biodiversity concern, sustainable trade condemns the misuse of natural resources and the distraction of the environment for profit. Some examples of that distraction are deforestation for agricultural purposes or habitat loss for raw material extraction. Sustainable trade proposes solutions to those problems by imposing deforestation-free import rules and enforcing laws that legally bind firms to address the ecological footprint and the biodiversity impact of their products.

As for lowering the percentage of greenhouse gases emitted through production and distribution of goods, sustainable trade supports corporations that adopt policies which protect the atmosphere such as using solar energy and electric vehicles to transport their products. That is really important because most of the world's greenhouse gases are caused from production, transport and distribution of goods, as all of those processes rely on burning carbon fuel which emits carbon dioxide and other harmful gases.

¹⁰ LinkedIn article, Sustainable Practices in Import-Export: Eco-Friendly Trade, Shalom International Trading and Logistic, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/sustainable-practices-import-export> / Accessed 28 July 2026



The Importance of Environmental Preservation and Moral Responsibility¹¹

Social Equality and Human Rights

Another important part of sustainable trade is social equality and human rights which refers to the rights of the worker. It makes a word for equal pay to both genders and works against discrimination in the workspace. Sustainable trade enforces fair labor and safety standards such as reasonable working hours, fair living wages and safe working environments. This part of sustainable trade is very important because it ensures the respect of Human Rights by all corporations wanting to gain the title of "Sustainable" and thus making a great step against

unpaid labor, child labor and unfair wages While also opening doors to women, minorities and marginalized groups.



Social Equality and Human Rights¹²

Economic viability

The last part of sustainable trade is the one that focuses on economic viability. Economic viability includes goals of long-term economic growth, reduction of poverty rates, and fair market access for all nations. This can be achieved by building resilient supply chains, which can withstand sudden market changes, geopolitical disruptions, and problems caused by the environmental

¹¹ Digital news article, The Importance of Environmental Preservation and Moral Responsibility, Laura Htet, <https://www.mdn.gov.mm/en/importance-environmental-preservation-and-moral-responsibility> / Accessed 22 August 2026

¹² The University of Alabama at Birmingham, Mary Bailey, <https://sites.uab.edu/humanrights/2022/02/21/comparing-human-rights-and-social-justice-for-the-world-day-of-social-justice/> / Accessed 22 August 2026

crisis, without collapsing or triggering severe price instability. There is also a market access which leads to lowering non-tariff barriers for small and medium corporations so they can compete against Mega-cooperations. Moreover, sustainable trade provides opportunities for low- and middle-income nations to take part in global trade.



Sustainable Trade¹³

Tariffs Imposed by the United States

In recent years US policy has been shifted towards tariffs as its main strategy to control its trade system. This shift in policy started in late 2024 when the US Trade representative issued Section 301, which imposes tariffs to Electric Vehicles, Solar Cells & Modules, EV Lithium-ion Batteries & Parts, Critical Minerals (Cobalt, Natural Graphite, Manganese), solar wafers and polysilicon. This caused massive reaction from the US's trading partners and mostly the EU and China which was targeted specifically with tariffs exceeding 50%. ¹⁴

In early 2025 tariffs from the US continued to rise, as there has been strong reaction from trading partners, reaching as high as 200% for Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam). In April 2nd 2025, which is known as “Liberation Day”, The administration imposes tariffs ranging from 10% to 40% as a reciprocal baseline for a tariff system targeting all trading partners with little to no exceptions. On August 27th 2025, The US doubled the tariffs imposed on a range of imported clean energy hardware from India reaching as high as 50% which fueled action from panel manufacturers that had as suppliers India, Indonesia and Laos, which demanded immediate lowering of the tariffs.

¹³ Article by Mauritius Trade, Sustainable Trade Practices, <https://mauritiustrade.com/sustainable-trade-practicessustainable-trade/> / Accessed 30 July

¹⁴ The U.S.-China Trade Relationship: What's Behind the Competition?, Council on Foreign Relations, 15 May 2026, www.cfr.org/backgrounders/contentious-us-china-trade-relationship. / Accessed 24 July 2026

In early 2026 US tariffs seem to stabilize and become permanent against all trading partners' concerns.¹⁵

The Connection Between US Tariffs and Sustainable Trade

Recent US tariffs have greatly affected Sustainable trade as they have caused higher costs, delayed decarbonization timelines, and disrupted global green supply chains. Tariffs targeting solar panels (25%), and the generalized tariffs on steel and aluminum (10%)¹⁶, have caused a great rise in clean energy costs while also delaying eco-friendly constructions such as solar parks due to increased construction costs. Moreover, shortage in eco-friendly materials pushes manufacturers to turn back to old ways which are harmful for the environment such as burning cold fuel instead of using solar energy. By limiting low-cost green energy, it is used by less and less households and corporations. The shortage is also present in the electronic vehicles' Market as prices continue to rise due to targeted tariffs. US tariffs have also caused panic in the Global Market and have unsettled relations between former trading allies, disrupting sustainable trade's views for World collaboration.

US tariffs have also affected the effort of achieving equal and inclusive trade which is a main objective of the United Nations. The increase in costs for the cooperations due to tariffs might lead them to redirect funds that were supposed to be used for fair wages and human rights objectives to production without regard to their workers. Moreover, elevated expenditure may cause manufacturers to reduce production, decreasing the need of working hands threatening working positions from all over the world and most importantly of low-waged people. Lastly, cost escalation might lead manufacturers to turn to cheaper approaches such as lowering wages or using child labor, making a huge step back in the process that has been made to eliminate this concept.

Global economic growth has also been greatly affected by the recent US tariffs, as they have shifted global trade. They have caused inefficiency throughout Global trade routes as many Businesses have rerouted their manufacturing or production in "tariff friendly" regions which frequently are more expensive or less efficient dragging down the global economy. Apart from that, US tariffs have caused a rise in inflation and consumer demand, as many imported products in the US have now increased their prices affecting

¹⁵ Office of the United States Trade Representative. Four-Year Review of Actions Taken in the Section 301 Investigation: China's Acts, Policies, and Practices Related to Technology Transfer, Intellectual Property, and Innovation. Executive Office of the President of the United States, May 2024, <https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/Section%20301%20Four-Year%20Review%20Report.pdf>. /Accessed 28 July 2026

¹⁶Center for strategic and international studies article, The Impacts of Tariffs on Clean Energy Technologies, Leslie Abrahams <https://www.csis.org/analysis/impacts-tariffs-clean-energy-technologies> / Accessed 29 July 2026



the market. This combined with elevated interest rates, brings about a massive decrease in Consumer spendings greatly dampening product growth.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

Canada

Canada is the United States' second largest trading partner and their alliance has always been strong. Recently however, the relation between the countries has soured because of the blanket tariff that the United States imposed on Canada in early 2025 which was met with retaliatory tariffs from Canada's side on strategic resources such as steel and aluminum exports, automotive parts and vehicles as well as agricultural products such as beef and dairy. The tension between the countries cooled for some time as both parties negotiated and signed the USMCA agreement, which kept most cross-border trade tariff-free. Most recently however tensions grew again as the United States cited being discriminated against by Canada's retaliatory restrictions and responded with a massive 50% tariff on many Canadian consumer goods.¹⁷

People's Republic of China (PRC)

China has had an extensive history of being targeted by US tariffs. Recently however tensions between the two countries have escalated into a full-scale trade war. Tariffs on China target specific mostly tech based strategic resources such as electric vehicles, lithium batteries, semiconductors and solar panels. China in return has put up tariffs of their own, targeting key sectors such as energy with their natural gas and oil tariffs, which aim to reduce China's dependency on US's energy as well as agriculture with massive tariffs on soybeans and corn, which has caused massive pain to farmers all over the US putting pressure on the United States government to make a deal. China has also taken non-tariff countermeasures which include restrictions on their rare earth exports which are vital to the technology and military sector of the US as well as banning or restricting market accessibility to many American aerospace and technology companies.

Mexico

As the United States' single largest nation-trading partner Mexico has been affected greatly by the new tariffs. Most of the trade between the United States and Mexico currently falls under the USMCA (United States, Mexico, Canada) Trade Agreement which ensures that no tariffs are applied to certain products. Currently the USMCA agreement is under annual review as the United States have cited concerns over third-party (specifically Chinese) supply-chain inputs in North American manufacturing.

¹⁷ Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. "Canada Getting the 'Art of the Deal' Treatment with New U.S. Tariffs." CCPA News & Research, 23 July 2026, www.policyalternatives.ca/news-research/canada-getting-the-art-of-the-deal-treatment-with-new-u-s-tariffs/ / Accessed 24 July 2026



The tariffs currently affecting Mexico are targeted and affect automotive exports as well as steel and aluminum exports. The United States has also expressed some concerns about Mexico's failure to stop the drug smuggling on the country's shared border. This dispute has undermined trade relations between the two countries and has played a vital role in negotiations regarding tariffs.

United States of America (USA)

The United States are the main perpetrator of the ongoing Global trade disruptions since many countries depend on them to import their goods. The United States has used tariffs as leverage to achieve better trading agreements, as a tool to take advantage of their position as the largest importer in the world to increase federal income as well as punishing countries who they believe they have been exploited by.

This however has led to a price increase in overall day to day expenses for most Americans leading to financial instability for many low-income households as the price of retail goods continues to increase in line with the tariffs being implemented.

Moreover, this strategic move has alienated many of the United States closest allies. As their relationship with the US has become more uncertain many countries have tried to reduce their reliance on the US.

European Union (EU)

As a single block the 27 countries of the European Union are the United States' biggest trading partner with the bilateral transatlantic trade between them exceeding 1.5 trillion dollars in 2025, with Germany being by far the biggest contributor. After the initial tariffs in early 2025 the EU was the most open to negotiations with the United States leading to an early agreement where the European Union dismantled trading barriers with the US and eliminated tariffs on US industrial exports while the US imposed a 15% tariff in a broad spectrum of goods including auto parts and pharmaceuticals as well as the 50% tariff in steel and aluminum exports.¹⁸

World Trade Organization (WTO)

The World Trade Organization, which was founded in 1994, (WTO) acts as a balance force which makes sure that both countries' free market and world trading balance are preserved. It has taken great measures to ensure that US' tariffs do not interfere with sustainable trade while also allowing the US government to control their market as they see fit. They have stated that any country that imposes tariffs must first prove that they are viable and needed for the wellbeing of their economy and that they are not used against a specific nation in a discriminatory manner. Also takes initiative to

¹⁸ Bruce, Graeme. "These 3 Charts Show Where Trump's New Tariffs Could Have the Biggest Impact." CBC News, 23 July 2026, www.cbc.ca/news/canada/charts-trump-tariffs-9.7279519. / Accessed 24 July 2026

promote sustainable trade through conventions and forums such as the world economic forum on green energy, in which solutions are proposed and measures are taken through the collaboration of most nations.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

DATE	EVENT
1947	Initiation of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
1971	Initiation of the Generalized System of Preferences
1994	Founding of World Trade Organization and establishing of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
September 2015	Issue of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
12th of December 2015	Adaptation of the Paris Agreement
14th of May 2024	Issue of Section 301 referring to the bifacial solar panel exemption
7th of January 2025	Publication of the United States Trade Representative (USTR): Adapting Trade Policy for Supply Chain Resilience document

RELEVANT UN TREATIES, CONVENTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) - UNCTAD Framework

The Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) was initiated in 1971 under the influence of UNCTAD and is considered a non-reciprocal trade program, which entails unilateral grants of duty-free or reduced tariffs for the exports of beneficiary developing countries by developed nations. It has played an important role in creating a positive trading climate for developing nations, while it has also been devised in order to create an environment of economic growth and reduction in poverty by promoting diversified trade. In our case, the US GSP came into effect in January 1976 for an indefinite period and was the largest and oldest US trade preference program. However, US GSP expired on 31 December 2020, and has not yet been renewed, demonstrating how lapses can disrupt



trade flows, with the US imports from eligible countries without access to alternative preferential schemes declining by 10.5%.¹⁹

General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)

The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was initiated in 1947 with hopes to manage trade and lower trade barriers after World War II and became one of the founding principles of World Trade Organization which was founded in 1994 along with the update of the agreement as part of the Marrakesh Agreement.

This document contains rules about equal trade within the members of WTO. More specifically it states that all member countries are obligated to impose the same tariff rates to all other member countries without favoring or discriminating against a specific trade partner. It also allows “tariff barriers” after the agreement of all member countries with the restriction that they will be lowered over time and favors tariffs as a means of controlling trade over quotas or bans on imports or exports, which are prohibited for member countries.

Today GATT remains the primal agreement on tariffs and it gives the baseline for all global trade. Recent US tariffs stretch the limits of the GATT and directly clash with its rule of equal trade resulting in an unstable trading environment. Although the WTO has taken measures to tackle the issue, they were ineffective, causing other countries to impose tariffs of their own rather than waiting for its further actions.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UNGA Resolution A/RES/70/1)

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UNGA Resolution A/RES/70/1) was voted in September of 2015 by the General Assembly of the UN and contains visions for global action against poverty, environmental problems and tensions between nations that will be implemented by 2030. Its more crucial points are the ones referring to equality amongst people and amongst nations in all aspects, fostering inclusive and violent-free societies and achieving universal partnership.

This Agenda is undermined by the current US tariffs as they have created a “trade war” which greatly affects the relations between nations. Moreover, they heavily burden Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) debilitating one of the core points of the agenda, the effort to eliminate poverty starting with weaker nations. This point is also affected by the shortage of working positions that is caused by the shrinking export revenue following the imposed tariffs.

Paris Agreement (2015)

The Paris Agreement (December 12th 2015) was adopted at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris and it was the first legal document to bind most of the world's countries under the obligation to take measures against climate change. Its main goal is to induce the temperature rise through the collaborative efforts of all nations. The agreement puts weight on its individual country's shoulders to manage their

¹⁹ Trade Preferences Outlook 2025: Navigating in Times of Uncertainty | UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), unctad.org/publication/trade-preferences-outlook-2025-navigating-times-uncertainty. Accessed 16 Oct. 2026.



ecological impact through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), special climate action targets that need to be raised every 5 years. Moreover, more economically stable nations agreed to fund the environmental programs of less economically advanced countries while ensuring that they indeed use the funds to reduce their ecological footprint. Countries continue to evaluate their progress with the standards set from the Paris Agreement, and meet every 5 years to assess collective growth and update the long-term goals of the agreement.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

United States Trade Representative (USTR): Adapting Trade Policy for Supply Chain Resilience

This document was published by the United States trade representative on January 7th 2025, and it proposes targeted tariff exclusion for specific essential materials that fall under the categories of environmental goods, recycled inputs or clean-tech components and that cannot be accessed globally. It also recommends reinforcing supply chain policies so that they are dependent on Sustainability, Security, Diversity, and Transparency so as green supply chains become resilient to sudden market shifts and thus protecting sustainable trade. While this was proposed it was never truly implemented and tariff exclusions remain narrow while US trade policy continues to include tariffs imposed on a wide variety of products.

Forum on Trade, Environment & the SDGs (TESS) Policy Brief: Trade and Climate Change in the World Trade Organization

The forum on trade, environment and the SDGs were conducted on November 7th of 2022 and was organized by the World Trade Organization. Some of the main solutions that it proposed were green tariff safeguards and the formation of a standardized environmental goods list. More specifically it proposed a global agreement through the WTO which would include specific tariff rates for low-carbon technologies and renewable energy hardware and if possible, a complete tariff exemption for such products. It also proposed that there would be a clear list of such products so it would be easier to document and assess the tariffs proposed by member nations. Although this was proposed there has not been an official agreement but this forum has led to the establishment of a dedicated forum in the WTO including more than 70 countries.

International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) Report: Trade and Sustainability Review (Regional Responses & Green Trade)

The International Institute for sustainable development report on trade and sustainability was being published throughout 2021 to 2024. It recommends that developing nations establish in-nation trade agreements regarding minerals that are essential for eco-friendly production so as they can bypass international trade barriers.

This report has caused regional value-addition initiatives across Africa and Latin America and although steps have been made for its ideas to be implemented there has not yet been an official adaptation.

World Economic Forum: Green Trade Action Agenda

The World Economic Forum on green trade action took place through 2021 to 2023. It proposed a Circular Economy Tariff Reform, which recommends creating custom tariff codes for recycled goods so that little to none tariffs are imposed on remanufactured materials. In this way, manufacturers are encouraged to adopt recycling in their production processes and sustainable trade is strengthened. This forum also advocates for the creation of “Digital product passports”, which will include a digital imprint of its product thus making the categorization and verification processes much faster while also allowing clean tech imports to immediately justify tariff relief. This forum was the start for the creation of the joint Action on Climate and Trade (ACT) initiative from the collaboration of the WTO and the World Bank. Today digital product passports are being piloted into World Trade, most notably in the EU, while steps are being made to include the circular economy tariff reform.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Strategic Supply Chain & Sourcing Adaptations

Member states can move manufacturing to allied countries with existing free-trade agreements to reduce tariff exposure while building resilient supply chains. They can also shift away from single-source dependencies by building multi-region procurement networks for critical materials, strengthening multi-nation collaboration.

Technology & Materials Innovation

Member states can launch research programmes to invent new and improved ways to achieve global sustainable trade while also maintaining country boundaries. That also respects each individual countries’ wishes and their ability to control their market as they deem right.

Develop Green Supply Chain Diversification Programs

Member States can assist Less Economically Developed Nations in establishing regional manufacturing of eco-friendly technology. This will help both in strengthening their economy and in creating new tariff-free trade roads specifically for green tech.

Increase Global rules regarding trade

Member states can propose a new agreement including specific rules regarding tariffs so as there is a modernized list that can be referred to in case of extreme decisions that may lead to trade wars. That will also help in case of a trial because it will be clear if any nation disregarded the specific rules enforced by the UN.

Enhanced Trade Data & Monitoring Mechanisms

Member states can collaborate to develop modernized monitoring mechanisms regarding global trade so as WTO can have a more active role in enforcing fair trading relations through nation collaboration and agreement. These mechanisms can be aided by an enhanced trade data center including statistics produced by all member states.

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