

From the Editor-in-Chief

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By the end of this year, the WTO will celebrate its 30th anniversary. The Chinese conventional wisdom believes that a man at thirty should stand firm upon the ground. However, the WTO at thirty seems to be afloat on the water. In fact, the golden era of the WTO was pretty short. In 2001, China's accession to the WTO and the launch of the Doha Round marked the climax of the WTO as well as globalization. Since then, the WTO has gradually drifted toward difficulties. The Doha Round is technically dead, though not officially. China's remarkable success after joining the WTO should be largely attributable to the multilateral trading system. Nevertheless, China's rise also results in a challenge to the existing world economic and power structure with its unprecedented size and speed. In turn, from the incumbent powers' response, it is obvious that they are getting more and more anxious about the imminent pursuer as well as increasingly unhappy about the current trading rules. No matter the existing trading system is right or wrong logically or legally, the result is unacceptable. While it has proven impossible to change China substantially as they wish, the alternative is to change the international trading system as well as themselves.

The multilateral trading system is surely at the highest risk since its inception after the Second World War. And today, China is the one who has the greatest stake in sustaining the system simply because it is the largest

manufacturer and exporter benefiting the most from the system. It seems clear that there is no choice for China but to support and defend the WTO. However, there are many disagreements and disputes about China's policies and practices and their impact on the WTO, China and other countries. In China, there is also confusion about why China has been so targeted by other countries of the WTO and whether the WTO is useful for China anymore. There are no short or clear answers for these knotty questions. Nobody can predict the future either. But what is certain is that we need to explore all these questions and try hard to find best answers and solutions for the good of the world.

China is relatively a latecomer for the multilateral trading system. So are the Chinese WTO research communities. Only when the Chinese government sought to enter the world apparel market and noticed the importance of the GATT, the Chinese academia started to study and focus on the international system. Over the three decades, the Chinese academia have done a great and valuable job in terms of disseminating the WTO knowledge, educating the WTO experts, analyzing the WTO impact on China and preparing for the WTO shock. Their work makes China the one with the widest awareness of the WTO among the public and government. But they are either not well prepared for the huge impact of China on the WTO system or lack sufficient research and understanding of how China could contribute to the development of the system. In particular, while a large number of WTO-related articles and books have been published in China in the last decades, only a few Chinese scholars have the channels and capabilities of taking part in the international dialogues with those much more sophisticated foreign counterparts. That was the major motivation of launching the *Journal of WTO and China* in 2011 which was and still is the only English journal published in China in this specific research field. While both the WTO and China have changed a lot since then, the Journal

remains focusing on introducing the opinions and findings of Chinese scholars about the WTO-related issues to the world. Starting from the 14th volume, the Journal has established a more diversified and wider-ranging members of editorial committee, trying to cover more multi-disciplinary studies on the WTO-related topics from the perspectives of economics, law and politics. We would like to present the thoughts and wisdoms of Chinese intellectuals regarding the multilateral trading system and China's possible contributions to the system.