



ODI Global

Conference concept note

Geoeconomics, trade and development: navigating a fragmented world

Tuesday, 23 September 2025 | 08:30 – 17:30 BST (GMT +01)

Hybrid: ODI Global, 4 Millbank, SW1P 3JA and Online via Zoom

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Introduction

More overtly than at any time since the post-war period, strategic interests are influencing international trade and foreign affairs. Power dynamics are leading to the formation of new alliances, with major implications for global and regional production networks and the rules-based trading system.

The reconfiguration of supply chains based on strategic concerns is occurring in tandem with the disruption anticipated by the 4th industrial revolution, but also the climate emergency. The new dynamics arising pose challenges for the economic security of many countries, especially smaller economies that have historically relied on the multilateral system to advance their economic interests. However, the potential for new alliances to be formed based on common values and principles driven by security concerns also presents significant new opportunities.

This conference will explore the new realities of geoeconomics. It will provide both broad geographical and focused thematic perspectives on the tectonic shifts occurring, as well as strategies to respond. It will reflect on the implications for economic diplomacy, supply chain governance and the longer-term implications for trade and investment-related governance.

By bringing together leading experts, policymakers and practitioners, this conference aims to foster dialogue and generate pragmatic suggestions for navigating the complex interplay between geopolitics, trade and development, and the tensions between domestic and international resilience, given the climate emergency.

The conference will begin promptly at 9:00am, with registration and coffee from 8:30am. Session 1 will provide regional perspectives on the global trade scenario; Session 2 will analyse the new landscape of trade-related economic diplomacy, encompassing security, defence and development. Session 3 will explore the intersection between supply chain resilience, climate change and development. We will conclude with a book launch and interactive discussion. A detailed agenda is provided below.

Agenda overview

Time	Activity
08:30am – 09:00am	Registration and welcome refreshments
08:50am – 09:00am	Online participants join the room
09:00am – 09:30am	<p>Welcoming remarks: Conference overview and scene setting</p> <p>Keynote address: Rt Hon Vince Cable, Distinguished ODI Fellow, ODI Global</p>
09:30am – 11:00am	<p>Session I: Regional perspectives on the global trade scenario</p> <p><i>This session will explore how different regions are adapting to geopolitical shifts, supply chain disruptions, and changing investment trends and what this means for the future of global trade.</i></p> <p>Moderator: Prof Dirk Willem te Velde, Director of Programme, ODI Global</p>
11:00am – 11:15am	Coffee break
11:15am – 12:45pm	<p>Session II: The new landscape of trade-related economic diplomacy: security, defence and development</p> <p><i>This session will examine the evolving landscape of trade diplomacy, exploring how countries are adapting their approaches in response to defence, domestic economic security and the imperative for global trade reform.</i></p> <p>Moderator: Dmitry Grozoubinski, Executive Director, Geneva Trade Platform</p>
12:45pm – 1:00pm	<p>Keynote address: H.E. Macenje Florence Mazoka, High Commissioner of Zambia to the United Kingdom</p>
1:00pm – 2:00pm	Networking lunch
2:00pm – 3.30pm	<p>Session III: Intersections and alignment with climate goals</p> <p><i>This session will explore the complex interplay between economic security, supply chain resilience and climate objectives, focusing on sustainable resource management and development in a changing global landscape.</i></p>

	Moderator: Professor David Luke LSE
3:30pm – 3:50pm	Closing plenary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing remarks: Dr Ruth Kattumuri, Senior Director, Economic, Development, Trade and Investment Directorate, Commonwealth Secretariat • Ganeshan Wignaraja, Visiting Senior Fellow, ODI Global • Jodie Keane, Principal Research Fellow, ODI Global: Conference wrap-up and next steps
3:50pm – 4:00pm	Coffee break
4:00pm – 5:00pm	Fireside chat with Dmitry Grozoubinski on <i>Why Politicians Lie About Trade</i> Moderator: Dr Jodie Keane, Principal Research Fellow, ODI Global
5.00pm – 5.30pm	Networking reception at ODI Global
5:30pm	End of conference
5:30pm onwards	Trade drinks hosted by George Riddell and Sam Lowe (Venue provided upon registration)

Detailed agenda

09:00 – 09:30 | Conference overview and scene setting

Keynote address by Sir Vince Cable, Distinguished Fellow, ODI Global

09:30 – 11:00 | Session I: Regional perspectives on the global trade scenario

The trade frictions, uncertainty and turmoil in global trade and the disruption across value chains have been devastating for many producers, countries and regions. Reciprocal measures have been initiated with impacts on supply chains and future investment trends. New agreements have been secured with implications for regional economic communities. This session will explore responses across different geographical regions and the implications for future supply chain development.

Moderator: Dirk Willem te Velde, Principal Research Fellow and Director, International Economic Development Group, ODI Global

Speakers:

- **Ganeshan Wignaraja**, Visiting Senior Fellow, ODI Global: *Changing India-China supply chain dynamics in global trade*
- **Patrick Low**, Former WTO Chief Economist and Board Member, Trade Negotiations Investment Forum (TNIF), Kenya: *Global trade dynamics and Africa*
- **Vera Thornstensen**, Professor at the School of Economics at the Getulio Vargas Foundation, São Paulo and WTO Chair in Brazil: *Geoeconomics and trade in Latin America*
- **Bernice Lee OBE**, Hoffmann Distinguished Fellow for Sustainability, Chatham House: *China and economic security*

11:00 – 11:15 | **Coffee break**

11:15 – 12:45 | **Session II: The new landscape of trade-related economic diplomacy: security, defence and development**

Intensifying geopolitical rivalries and a widespread recognition of the need to reform global trade rules (coupled with the inability so far to make progress) have spurred new drives towards transactional trade-related economic diplomacy. While the US stands out as one extreme, all countries are adopting their approaches to the new pressures of defence and domestic economic security agendas. This session will reflect on the implications for the global trade architecture, conventional trade and development partnerships, and related support measures.

Moderator: Dmitry Grozoubski, Executive Director, Geneva Trade Platform

Speakers:

- **Simon J Evenett**, Professor of Geopolitics and Strategy, The International Institute for Management Development (IMD): *Growing protectionism*

- **Mona Paulsen**, Assistant Professor of Law, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE): *Collective action and multilateralism in global trade*
- **David Henig**, Director, UK Trade Policy Project: *The changing nature of globalisation*
- **Max Mendez-Parra**, Principal Research Fellow, ODI Global: *Economic security, trade and development policy challenges*
- **Agnes Gitau**, Managing Partner, GBS Africa, and Executive Director, Eastern Africa Association: *Managing geopolitical rivalries*
- **Taufiqur Rahman**, Director, Development Division, World Trade Organization (WTO): *National Security and Development at the WTO*

12:45 – 13:00 | **Keynote address**

- **H.E. Mrs. Macenje Florence Mazoka**, High Commissioner of Zambia to the United Kingdom

13:00 – 14:00 | **Networking lunch**

14:00 – 15:30 | **Session III: Navigating the intersection of supply chain resilience, climate goals and development**

The movement towards government-driven supply chains across sectors marks a distinct new phase in globalisation. There are profound implications for the management of critical mineral resources for both producers and buyers. However, domestic economic security and climate goals have increasingly begun to diverge. This session will explore the new drivers across supply chains, how sustainability goals intersect and more broadly, how risks to development can be addressed.

Moderator: Ganeshan Wignaraja, Visiting Senior Fellow, ODI Global

Speakers:

- **Jodie Keane**, Principal Research Fellow, ODI Global: *Supply chain governance and economic and environmental resilience*

- **Trevor Sutton**, Director, Trade and the Clean Energy Transition, Center on Global Energy Policy (CGEP), Columbia University: *Green energy supply chains*
- **George Riddell**, Managing Director, Goyder: *Strategic Supply Chain Management for International Business*
- **Emily Lydgate**, Professor of Environmental Law, co-Director of UK Trade Policy Observatory and Deputy Director of the Centre for Inclusive Trade Policy: *Economic integration and environmental protection*
- **Colette van der Ven**, Founder and Director, TULIP Consulting
- **Madelaine Tuininga**, Minister Counsellor, Head Trade and Economic Affairs, EU Delegation to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (TBC)

15:30 – 15.50

Closing plenary

- **Ruth Kattumuri**, Senior Director, Economic, Development, Trade and Investment Directorate, Commonwealth Secretariat
- **Ganeshan Wignaraja**, Visiting Senior Fellow, ODI Global
- **Jodie Keane**, Principal Research Fellow, ODI Global

15:50 – 16:00

Coffee break

16:00 – 17:00

Fireside chat with Dmitry Grozoubinski on *Why Politicians Lie About Trade*

Author and former trade negotiator, Dmitry Grozoubinski will unveil the secrets behind the \$32 trillion-a-year global trade machine in his eye-opening book, “Why Politicians Lie About Trade”.

Why politicians lie about trade reveals how international trade really works and the compromises and deals nations must make to take part in the greatest commercial show on earth.

With clear writing and lively case studies, Grozoubinski takes readers on an often humorous tour of the shadowy workings of the agreements, tariffs, taxes and disputes that characterise this \$32 trillion-a-year machine.

He reveals the underlying political and geographical forces that shape the impact of trade on topics as diverse and important as food, jobs, gender, conflict and climate change. And he reveals what politicians cover up about the system – and why it matters.

Moderator: Jodie Keane, Principal Research Fellow, ODI Global

Speaker: Dmitry Grozoubinski, followed by an interactive Q&A

17:00 – 17:30 | **Networking reception**

17:30 | **End of conference**

17:30 | **Trade drinks**
Hosted by George Riddell and Sam Lowe

By invitation only. Venue to be provided upon registration