

## **Abstract**

The paper argues that South Africa's participation in the World Trade Organization since the birth of its democracy in 1994 was informed by its domestic development challenges. It claims that South Africa's values were derived from its long struggle against apartheid and its transition to a new democracy. South Africa's political leadership in the Doha negotiations was also strengthened by its deep democratic institutions and consultative processes. South Africa's values, articulated by Nelson Mandela, reflected a deep commitment to multilateralism and consensus building, fairness and justice, inclusiveness, and a concern to support and promote development, within South Africa, and also in developing countries, especially the African continent. The paper discusses how and why South Africa's unique value system enabled it to play a significant role in the Doha Round. The paper concludes that South Africa is both part of the group of major emerging developing countries and a crucial bridge to a smaller group of developing countries, particularly in Africa.

**Keywords:** South Africa, multilateral trading system, WTO, democracy, Mandela, normative

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