



The Role of Public Participation in the Impact Assessment of Trade Process

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- o **Why is public participation important?**
- o **International, Regional and National Instruments**
- o **Principles of public participation**
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Why is public participation important?

a) Benefits of Public Participation

- Strengthens Democracy
- Increases Accountability
- Improves Process Quality
- Manages Social Conflicts
- Safeguards against Externalities
- Enhances Process Legitimacy
- Protects Business Interests

b) Concerns about Public Participation

- Public Participation Does Not Represent all Citizens
- Feedback in Decision-Making
- International Trade Negotiations Require Confidentiality

International, Regional and National Instruments

a) International Instruments:

- Rio Declaration, Principle 10
- Universal Declaration on Human Rights and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Agenda 21
- The Vienna Declaration

b) Regional Instruments:

- Aarhus Convention or the 1998 UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters
- Inter-American Strategy for the Promotion of Public Participation in Decision-making for Sustainable Development
- Inter-American Democratic Charter

c) National instruments:

- 1999 Canadian Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals
- Freedom of Information Acts



Principles of public participation

- **Access to Information: Right-to-know**
- **Access to participation**



How to engage public participation

Public deliberation Workshops

- **Online public deliberation**
- **Educational programs**
- **Media Outreach**



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Conclusions