

WTO members want more transparency in China trade policies

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GENEVA (AFP) — China should enhance the transparency of its domestic regulations and standards, according to World Trade Organisation member states after a review Friday of Beijing's trade policies.

At the same time, China should also improve protection and respect for intellectual property rights, they said.

The China review, part of a regular process for members every four years, was good overall, said Clem Boonekamp, director of the WTO's Trade Policies Review Division.

Boonekamp noted that delegates offered "a significant amount of commendations" on the progress China has made to its trade regime but at the same time, the issue of transparency appeared to be a main sticking point.

"Every delegation mentioned ... the area of transparency," Boonekamp told reporters in Geneva.

Members found that Chinese regulations "remain complex or even opaque. This is particularly (so) in domestic regulations but also in technical standards and perhaps in other areas like government procurement," Boonekamp said.

Meanwhile, members also voiced concern over protection of intellectual property rights, partly arising from the lack of appropriate infrastructure and manpower.

The WTO report on China's trade policy, which was used as a basis for the review, noted that Beijing had made its export regime "considerably more restrictive" due in part to efforts to reduce its large trade surplus.

"A variety of measures, including export taxes, reduced rebates of VAT on exports and export prohibitions, licensing and quotas, are used to restrain, if not prohibit, exports of a considerable and growing number of products," the WTO report said.