

**PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU
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PRESS RELEASE

**BRAINSTORMING ON WTO IN THE POST-MC11 PHASE
19-20 February 2018**



A two-day brainstorming meeting on WTO in the Post-MC11 Phase was organised by the Department of Commerce and the Centre for WTO Studies on 19-20 February 2018. The participants included representatives from industry, government, academia, think tanks, civil society and trade policy experts.

The objective of organising this 2-day brainstorming was to consult as widely as possible to elicit views on the WTO in the post-MC11 phase. The agenda was

comprehensive, covering a wide range of issues such as Agriculture, Services, Investment Facilitation, E-commerce, Institutional Issues, Development, MSMEs and Gender.

The meeting witnessed large participation and a frank and intensive exchange of views on all issues, both in the current negotiating agenda of the WTO as well as the issues being proposed for future negotiations by some countries.

In his remarks, the Commerce and Industry Minister expressed great satisfaction at the depth and breadth of issues discussed and the insights provided by the participants. He emphasised that special and differential treatment remains a critical aspect of the WTO's framework and this is non-negotiable for India. While some of the new issues being raised by others may also be of relevance to India, existing issues such as agriculture are critical livelihood issues, which are extremely important for India.

He emphasised the critical importance of the WTO and drew attention to Hon'ble Prime Minister's remarks at Davos on the importance of multilateralism. Reflecting on India's long membership of GATT/WTO, the Minister stated that India plays a key role in ensuring the continued relevance of the WTO, as this is in the best interest of all countries, without exception.

In this context he highlighted the importance India places on the forthcoming informal WTO Ministerial gathering scheduled to be held in Delhi on 19th and 20th March 2018, on India's initiative, which is likely to be attended by over 50 countries representing the entire spectrum of nations ranging from LDCs, developing countries to the developed countries.

Appreciating the enthusiastic engagement by participants, the Minister said that such interactions would be organised regularly.

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