

Re-Energising Doha – A Commitment to Development Ministerial Meeting New Delhi, 3-4 September 2009: Chair's Summary (4 September 2009)

Excellencies, Director General Mr. Lamy, Senior Officials, Ambassadors, and distinguished delegates,

We have now reached the end of two days of intensive engagement. Let me first thank you all for your statements and interventions over the course of the last day or so. I am happy that we were able to cover so much ground in such a short span of time. I trust you will all agree that we have made good progress over the last two days or so and we now have a fair idea of the way forward.

The Delhi Ministerial meeting was conceived and designed as a representative forum of the WTO membership, bringing together groups from across the spectrum of interests and positions in the Doha negotiations, in a microcosm of the WTO itself, in a bid to give a determined push to the multilateral process.

The objective was to develop a broad-based consensus to remove the impediments coming in the way of multilateral discussions and to provide clear directions to negotiators to re-energise the multilateral process at the WTO.

I will now summarise the proceedings of 3rd and 4th September.

Ministers recalled the outcomes of meetings held earlier during the year at London (G20), Bali (Cairns Group), Paris (Trade Ministers), L'Aquila (G8 plus) and Singapore (APEC Trade Ministers). It was further recalled that leaders had set a timeline of 2010 for the conclusion of the Doha Round.

Ministers acknowledged that the unambiguous political signals emanating from earlier meetings had not been translated into action in Geneva. They were conscious that mere reaffirmation of commitment was not enough unless this was converted into effective instructions to negotiators to re-engage, with a view to concluding the Round successfully within 2010.

Ministers were also sensitive to the deleterious impact of the prolonged global economic crisis, which has put to the test the commitment of member countries to free, fair and equitable rule-based international trade. They were unanimous in expressing the view that strengthening the multilateral trading system by concluding the Doha Round at the earliest, was vital.

The Director General, WTO provided an overall perspective of the way forward. The Chairs of the Agriculture, NAMA and Services Negotiating Groups outlined their work plans in their respective areas.

The G-20 and the G-33 emphasized the need to respect the multilateral mandate as reflected in the work done on the Agriculture and NAMA modalities over the last seven years; both Groups were of the view that the texts of December 2008 must form the basis of future work. Regarding the negotiating process, they reiterated that bilateral and plurilateral meetings could only be used to supplement the multilateral process and not to substitute it. The G-20 called for the expeditious completion of the Round with contributions from all Members.

The Cotton-4 recalled the mandate of the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration according to which the cotton issue must be addressed ambitiously, expeditiously and specifically. They expressed the hope that this issue would be taken up on priority when talks resumed. They were supported in this by all other Groups, particularly, the G-33, the G-20, the African Group and the ACP Group.

The African Group re-emphasized the importance of keeping development concerns as the main focus of negotiations. The Group stated that issues of concerns to LDCs needed to be tackled frontally in the negotiations.

The ACP Group reaffirmed the need for the banana issue to be specifically addressed outside of the modalities on agriculture, in order to reach a just and balanced outcome.

The two groups, supported by CARICOM, also drew the attention of participants to the progress made in July 2008 on preference erosion modalities. They expressed disappointment that the specific understandings developed then had not reached fruition on account of the delay in resumption; they emphasized the importance of this issue for their economies.

The G-10 group expressed its commitment to a successful and expeditious conclusion of the Doha Round to face the economic downturn and to fight the spread of protectionism. Citing the contributions being made by developed countries, the Group stressed the need for a balanced result in the single undertaking.

The LDC Group expressed concern that delay in concluding the Doha Round was costing them dearly. They called for an expeditious conclusion of the Round and progress on issues that were critical to them including DFQF.

Statements were made by coordinators of the groups on behalf of their groups and some of the Member countries in their individual capacities.

Let me turn now to what I believe are the understandings reached on a number of process-related issues that would determine the way ahead. These are summarized below:

There was a unanimous affirmation on the need to conclude the Doha Round within 2010. There was a clear recognition that differences subsist on issues and intensifying negotiations was the first step towards bridging these gaps.

There was a strong re-affirmation that development remains at the heart of the Doha Round.

Ministers also called upon Chief Negotiators/Senior Officials to meet in Geneva beginning 14 September 2009 to draw up a process of engagement for the next 2-3 months; and, to work with the Chairs of

the Negotiating Groups to prepare an overall agenda of action.

Ministers agreed that Chairs of the Negotiating Groups on Agriculture and NAMA would be requested to draw up issue-based work plans in consultation with Chief Negotiators/ Senior Officials, for intensifying engagement to complete negotiations.

Ministers agreed that in consultation with Chief Negotiators/Senior Officials, Chairs of other Negotiating Groups would also draw up work plans, including, where applicable, tabling, discussion and finalization of texts where required and the timelines for submission of revised offers (Services), in line with the overall agenda of action.

Ministers agreed that negotiations should resume on the basis of progress achieved till December 2008.

Ministers agreed that work agenda for LDCs covering all specific issues across the entire spectrum should be put on a faster track for negotiating convergence with the DG Lamy and Chairs of Negotiating Groups taking the lead in this process.

Ministers were of the view that the multilateral process should continue to be the main process of negotiations for the strength of its inclusiveness and transparency. Other forms of engagements can work as an adjunct for developing a better understanding among members.

Ministers agreed to review progress and provide further guidance on how to complete negotiations within the expected 2010 timeline. All opportunities for political guidance, including at the level of leaders to be used between now and the end of November 2009 as also to iteratively track progress.

Mindful of the fact that the Doha Round has been in progress for eight years, it was agreed that all efforts must be made to bring the Round to an ambitious and development oriented conclusion within 2010 as resolved by world leaders.

This brings me to the end of my summary of proceedings.

I thank you all once again for your enthusiastic support and participation. I am glad that you have made the effort and taken the time to participate in this Ministerial meeting. I am sure that our efforts will bear fruit and we will see a constructive resumption of Doha Round talks very soon.

I wish you all a safe and pleasant journey home and look forward to our continued association.

Thank you.