

Informal WTO Ministerial Gathering, Davos, 20 January 2023

Personal Concluding Remarks by the Chair, Federal Councillor Guy Parmelin, Switzerland

23 Ministers and high officials representing a broad spectrum of the WTO membership attended this year's Informal World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Gathering. In concluding and with warm thanks to all participants for their contributions, I would like to summarize the main points from our discussions as follows:

- Ministers expressed their appreciation for the successful outcomes of the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) of June last year and underlined the significance of WTO delivering substantive, multilaterally-negotiated outcomes.
- Building on the achievements at MC12, Ministers stressed their commitment to a successful outcome of the 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13). They expressed their gratefulness to the United Arab Emirates for hosting the next WTO Ministerial Conference in February 2024 in Abu Dhabi and to Cameroon for hosting the 14th Ministerial Conference (MC14).
- Ministers expressed their resolve to preserve the credibility of the rules-based multilateral trading system and to undertake a meaningful reform of the WTO to improve all its functions. Many Ministers underlined the importance of considering development needs along the entire reform process. Issues related to LDC graduation were also stressed.
- Ministers recalled the commitment at MC12 to conduct discussions with a view to having a fully functioning dispute settlement system accessible to all Members by 2024. Most participants highlighted this objective as a priority.
- Ministers welcomed the adoption of the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies at MC12 and called on Members to ratify the Agreement without delay so that it can enter into force soon. Numerous Ministers also stressed the importance of completing the remaining negotiations on fisheries subsidies by the next ministerial meeting.
- Referring to concerns about the considerable social and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of Ministers emphasised the need to extend the TRIPS Decision adopted at MC12 to cover the production and supply of COVID-19 diagnostics and therapeutics.
- Ministers stressed the need for effective negotiations on agricultural trade policy reform. Many participants highlighted food security as well as other concerns such as subsidies, export restrictions, public stockholding and environmental issues.
- Several Ministers also called for an extension of the moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions. The reinvigoration of the work program was also underlined in order to inform decision making on this matter.
- While multilateral outcomes remain the preferred option, many considered that it is important to continue to apply new approaches that allow Members to pursue, in an open and inclusive manner, initiatives of interest to them.

- In this context, many Ministers welcomed the progress in the Joint Statement Initiative negotiations such as on E-commerce and Investment Facilitation. Many Ministers also expressed their commitment to advance the work in other joint statement initiatives.
 - The importance of environmental sustainability and trade and climate were also highlighted by several participants.
 - Ministers showed their readiness to remain involved in the preparations for MC13 to further engage for meaningful results.
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