

Informal WTO Ministerial Gathering, Davos, 24 January 2025

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

23 Ministers and high officials representing a broad spectrum of the WTO membership, as well as the Director General of the WTO, attended this year's Informal World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Gathering organized by Switzerland in Davos.

Extending my warm thanks to all participants for their contributions, I would like to summarize the main points from our discussions as follows:

- They underlined the significance of the WTO and the rules-based, transparent and predictable multilateral trading system.
- Building on the achievements at MC13, Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to delivering a successful result at the next Ministerial Conference.
- Ministers expressed their gratefulness to Cameroon for hosting the 14th Ministerial Conference (MC14) in Yaoundé in March 2026.
- Ministers declared their determination to preserve and strengthen the rules-based multilateral trading system, especially now, in view of increasing geopolitical tensions, economic fragmentation and threats of unilateral measures.
- At the same time, Ministers have pointed to the need to adapt the WTO's instruments and rules to the current challenges in global trade.
- In this regard, Ministers also reiterated the importance of having a fully functional dispute settlement system.
- They urged members to find solutions that ensure the binding character of WTO rulings and preserve the WTO's important role in guaranteeing a rules-based international trading system.
- Ministers shared the view that the next ministerial conference must include outcomes that address the important topic of development.
- Ministers stressed the need to launch substantive negotiations on agricultural trade.
- Some Ministers called for a comprehensive or balanced treatment of all relevant negotiation topics.
- Others argued that priority should be given to the topics mandated in earlier ministerial decisions. Ministers expressed their willingness to further engage in this matter.
- Many Ministers also called for a further extension of the moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions at MC14.
- The conclusion of the extension on the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies was also mentioned as a key deliverable for the organization.
- Multilateral outcomes remain the preferred option.
- However, for many Ministers plurilateral initiatives are an important tool for the WTO to tackle the pressing current challenges.

- In this context, many Ministers welcomed the finalization of the negotiations of the Joint Statement Initiatives on E-commerce and Investment Facilitation for Development.
 - They called to find a solution for their integration into the WTO framework.
 - The close interlinkage between trade and environmental sustainability as well as climate issues were highlighted by many Ministers as a topic highly relevant for WTO.
 - Many Ministers expressed their commitment to advance the work in the initiatives on trade and environmental sustainability.
 - In light of an exchange with invited representatives from the private sector at the beginning of today's gathering, Ministers underlined the importance of the multilateral trading system for business and prosperity for all.
 - Ministers showed their readiness to remain involved in the preparations for MC14 to further engage with a view to achieving meaningful results.
-