



Negotiating Group on Rules

**NEGOTIATING GROUP ON RULES
FISHERIES SUBSIDIES**

WORK PROGRAMME

JANUARY – JULY 2019

Communication from the Chair

Attached is the work programme for the negotiations on fisheries subsidies in the Negotiating Group on Rules which was agreed at the open-ended meeting of the Group on 7 December and distributed to all delegations by e-mail later that same day.

- As stated in my e-mail of 7 December, it is important that we start our work as early as possible in the New Year. Therefore, the first cluster of meetings will start on Monday 14 January with a short plenary meeting with the rest of the day reserved for bilateral meetings and other Member organized meetings. Each of the four following mornings is reserved for open-ended consultations, with one each for: IUU fishing; overfished stocks; overcapacity and overfishing; and cross-cutting issues.
- The cross-cutting issues include: special and differential treatment; issues relating to disputes; institutional arrangements; and notifications and transparency. It is understood that the cross-cutting issues are integral to each of the other areas and will have to be integral parts of the negotiations on each of them. In addition, to ensure they are fully and coherently addressed, the cross-cutting issues need to be taken up in an open-ended consultation dedicated to them.
- In addition to Monday afternoon, the afternoons on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday are reserved for bilateral and other Member organized meetings.
- This first week of meetings in January 2019 is a trial run and the structure may need to be adapted in the following clusters. Therefore, a detailed schedule has been agreed only for the week beginning 14 January, and the session on Friday afternoon, 18 January will include an opportunity for Members to make comments and for us to consider whether to adapt the meeting structure, and, if so, how.
- Those delegations that would like to benefit from technical cooperation in the form of regional workshops are encouraged to coordinate with other Members in their region and get in contact with the Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation in the WTO, bearing in mind the dates of the meeting clusters.
- I took good note that several delegations would like to have financial assistance to allow them to bring capital-based officials to the clusters of meetings, and that they will be pursuing this in other fora at the WTO. I have also asked the Secretariat to look into different ways for capital-based officials to be more closely involved through communications technology.
- Ambassadors will play an important role in the negotiations and I will be meeting them on Friday 14 December in the morning to inform them of developments and our objectives. I will also ask them to give their delegates the instructions to fully engage in negotiations. While I wish to involve Ambassadors substantively as soon as feasible, the exact timing for

this will depend on how quickly we can make progress at the technical level in the Negotiating Group.

- On Friday 7 December I sent an invitation to all delegations asking for nominations for facilitators. As discussed, there will be one facilitator for each area (that is: one for IUU; one for overfished stocks; one for overcapacity and overfishing; and a fourth for cross-cutting issues). Your nominations should be from among delegates that could be available at short notice, so presumably based in Geneva or nearby. In their areas of responsibility, their roles will be: to maintain contact with delegations regarding Member-organized work; if invited, to sit in on Member-organized meetings; if requested, to offer suggestions and advice; to follow discussions at the open-ended consultations; and to advise me on progress in their areas of responsibility and otherwise to assist with the work of the Negotiating Group. Of course, the facilitators, in their role as such, would have to remain impartial and independent although outside of that role these individuals would be free to represent their positions as Members.

As outlined above, the schedule for the January cluster of meetings is as follows:

Monday 14 January

10.00 – 11.00	Plenary
11.00 – 13.00	Bilateral and other Member organized meetings
15.00 – 18.00	Bilateral and other Member organized meetings

Tuesday 15 January

10.00 – 13.00	Open-ended consultations – IUU fishing
15.00 – 18.00	Bilateral and other Member organized meetings

Wednesday 16 January

10.00 – 13.00	Open-ended consultations – Overfished stocks
15.00 – 18.00	Bilateral and other Member organized meetings

Thursday 17 January

10.00 – 13.00	Open-ended consultations – Overcapacity and overfishing
15.00 – 18.00	Bilateral and other Member organized meetings

Friday 18 January

10.00 – 13.00	Open-ended consultations – Cross-cutting issues (special and differential treatment, disputes, institutional arrangements)
15.00 – 18.00	Plenary – reports from Members on their meetings, stock taking on the process and progress of the week, and discussion of a suggested detailed programme for the meeting in February.

The following clusters will be during the weeks beginning **25 February, 25 March, 6 May, 10 June 2019** (noting that this is a WTO holiday but meeting facilities will be available for bilateral and other Member organized events), and **8 July 2019**. Each cluster will be for five days.