



Trade Negotiations Committee

MINUTES OF MEETING

HELD IN THE CENTRE WILLIAM RAPPARD ON 20 JULY 2023

Chairperson: Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (Director-General)

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1 INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY THE CHAIRPERSON

1.1. The Chairperson welcomed Members to the forty-sixth meeting of the Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC) and to the Informal Heads of Delegation. She wished Colombian colleagues a Happy Independence Day. She noted that the FIFA Women's World Cup had officially kicked off in Australia and New Zealand and recalled that in May, during the WTO event on "Making Trade Score for Women" – FIFA President Gianni Infantino and herself had unveiled the 2023 Women's World Cup official trophy together with Ambassador Clare Kelly (New Zealand) and Ambassador George Mina (Australia). Before turning to the business of the meeting, she put on record her appreciation to one of the Negotiating Group Chairs and one of her DDGs, who would soon leave their positions.

1.2. She said that like herself, many of Members had probably not had the opportunity to participate in a meeting of the Negotiating Group on Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA). This had nothing to do with the outgoing NAMA Chair – Ambassador Didier Chambovey of Switzerland. Ambassador Chambovey had had a rich and long history with the organization – from his early days as a capital-based official in Bern, to eventual posting as Ambassador to the WTO. Ambassador Chambovey had ably chaired several WTO Bodies through delicate moments – most recently the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) and General Council, where they had an excellent working relationship. As GC Chair in particular, and as coordinator of the Friends of the System, Ambassador Chambovey had been a key pillar in building convergence among the membership and had helped lay the foundations for Members' collective success last year at MC12. Members would remember Ambassador Chambovey as Mr WTO Reform. He was leaving a stellar legacy in the house of trade. She thanked him for his important contributions as ambassador – and for being a wonderful host to the WTO. He should be looking forward to practicing his guitar and enjoying hikes and mountain bikes without an urgent call from the WTO. But she hoped to see him around in Geneva or elsewhere. She knew the WTO could count on him to keep advocating for it and the multilateral trading system in Switzerland and wherever his future would lead him. She thanked Ambassador Chambovey for being a true friend of the system.

¹ The Reports by the Director-General, including as TNC Chairperson, the Chairperson of the General Council and the Chairpersons of the NGR, CoA SS and CTD SS can also be found in document [JOB/TNC/111](#).

1.3. She also thanked the departing Deputy Director-General, Anabel González. When taking office, she had pledged to ensure that the WTO was relevant, dynamic, and resilient – and DDG González, with her combination of intellectual dynamism and managerial skill, had been a vital force in all these efforts. She had led Secretariat-wide and external collaborative work on the digital economy, intellectual property, technology and AI, global supply chains, services and trailblazing research and databases. She hoped that DDG González would continue sharing her insights as she had through her Trade Thoughts blogs. The WTO owed her a debt of gratitude for her relentless efforts in the lead up to MC12 that had helped make possible the outcomes on the TRIPS Waiver and pandemic response. Having served the organization in several capacities over the years, she had seen the WTO and its Members transform. She was confident that DDG González would continue to be one of the WTO's strongest advocates and thanked DDG González for her service to her, the Secretariat, and the Membership. She wished her all the best.

1.4. Regarding the organization of the meeting, she drew Members' attention to the convening notice in [ICN/TNC/3](#) and the proposed agenda in [TN/C/W/84](#). At Members' request, she had set out in more detail expectations under each agenda item – including the list of Negotiating Group Chairs who would provide a report, as well as two guiding questions to focus discussions. After Members' interventions, again in line with their request at the last WTO Reform retreat, the Informal HODs would be extended to allow her as Director-General to update Members on ongoing developments within the Secretariat, including the transformation process, the strategic vision and focus pillars exercises, the new Civil Society and Business Advisory Groups, ongoing DDG selection process and the WTO budget. In the interest of making the best use of time, she appealed to delegations to be focused on their interventions – in particular, to respond directly to the two questions in the convening notice, as well as to her report – and to consider sending the rest of their statements to the Secretariat for the record. Given that many of Members had praised as effective, the timing of interventions that the GC Chairperson had introduced for GC meetings, she thought that adopting the same approach in the TNC would serve Members well in ensuring an efficient conduct of business. In this regard, starting with the current meeting, interventions would be timed. In this regard, she requested Members speaking on behalf of the delegation to intervene for a maximum of 5 minutes and those speaking for a group for a maximum of 7 minutes. To aid in the time management, a stopwatch would be shown on the screen.

2 REPORTS BY THE CHAIRPERSONS OF THE BODIES ESTABLISHED BY THE TNC

2.1. Ambassador Einar Gunnarsson (Iceland), Chairperson of the Negotiating Group on Rules (NGR), delivered the following report:

2.2. My report will be brief given that my comprehensive report at last week's Fish Week closing was circulated to all Members on 17 July. Since my last report to the TNC, we have progressed quite well. We have held four Fish Weeks – one in March, one in April, one in June and one last week. We started the second wave negotiations with the first Fish Week in March focusing on the conceptual underpinnings of the work before us. One month later, in April, these conceptual discussions went from the 'what' or 'why' of what we want to get out of the second wave of negotiations, to the 'how' of what we can do to get the results we want. By the third fish week, we had proceeded from these conceptual discussions to exchanging views on five proposals tabled at the beginning of June and additional three in the fourth fish week in July. Members have been extremely constructive, in both bringing forward and engaging on ideas and in engaging on the new ideas. The objective of the fourth Fish Week was to hear concrete ideas and specific views on the elements in the various proposals as well as the outstanding parts of the W5 and W20 documents that could help form a basis for our text-based discussions in the fall. To provide a reference for Members, I created a table containing a "menu" of options, which was viewed as helpful in organizing the discussions. As requested by Members, I intend to circulate an updated version of the Menu to incorporate the latest proposals. Clearly, we have done a lot over the last few months. I would like to thank all Members for their hard work and constructive engagement toward our common objective of concluding our negotiations by December.

2.3. On substance, my overall assessment is that there are overlaps between many proposals, and I think this reflects that this is a mature negotiating file. Generally, Members' perspective on what to use as the basis for text-based discussions can be categorized into three broad views:

- a. First, there are Members who view W20 and W5 as a clear basis while nevertheless recognizing that adjustments need to be made.

- b. Second, there are Members that while still speaking from the basis of W20 and W5 are calling for more fundamental changes to the approach.
- c. Third, there are some Members who propose a different approach to W20 and W5, however still formulating their approach as a hybrid one.

2.4. Considering where the weight of preferences among these categories currently seems to lie, taking into account not only on numbers but also on diversity, and participation in global fisheries, my sense is that the greatest degree of convergence is still found around W20 and W5 but with varying degrees of adjustment or further development. These variations are numerous and somewhat diverse, so we still have a lot of work to do to reach consensus by December. Before suggesting a specific basis for text-based discussions in the fall, ideally, we should have the full picture of Members' ideas and proposals. I thus urge those Members with pending submissions to provide them as soon as possible as to maximize the possibility of them for impacting the process. In that respect, let me note that the United Kingdom has circulated their proposal this morning. So, thank you, United Kingdom. I have made it clear that our negotiating space in the fall will be short. We will have to hit the ground running in mid-September and finish our work before the TNC and GC in December to be in good shape for MC13. That gives us about ten weeks of negotiating space following the summer break. While we have scheduled four Fish Weeks in the fall, I would ask delegations to be prepared to continue working, potentially in different configurations, in between them. The Senior Officials meeting in October provides us with an excellent opportunity to take stock of the negotiations and Members resolve to conclude in time for MC13.

2.5. Finally, just a quick note to say that yesterday, 19 July, we launched the technical process of working on documents, practices, and processes for the Committee on Fisheries Subsidies to use when established. This was a constructive first meeting where Members provided concrete ideas of priority areas on which the technical work should focus. I asked Josefina Bunge from Argentina to help me with this work. She will be working with Members during the coming months on the various elements that the Committee on Fisheries Subsidies, upon entry into force of the Agreement, would need to address as a first order of business.

2.6. Ambassador Alparslan Acarsoy (Türkiye), Chairperson of the Special Session of the Committee on Agriculture (CoA SS) and the Sub Committee on Cotton, delivered the following report:

2.7. I will briefly take stock of where we are in the agriculture negotiations today. Following my designation as Chair of the CoA Special Session on 27 January, almost six months ago, I have convened five meetings of the CoA Special session, and four meetings of both the dedicated sessions on PSH and SSM. I also convened one cotton quad plus meeting in April. We have also had five seminars on food security, PSH, domestic support, market access and export restrictions back-to-back with the March and May meetings. These seminars were in my view useful in informing the negotiations by providing Members with an opportunity to hear from one another based on their own experiences and exchange with experts from various international organizations. Members discussed in March a proposal on PSH initially introduced before MC12, as well as an analytical submission on Domestic Support and a new submission on food security. In June, Members discussed three new submissions on Domestic Support, including two proposals and one analytical paper, a scoping paper on Export Restrictions, a list of questions on the proposal discussed earlier on PSH and a revised submission on SSM. The proponents on PSH also organized on 26 June an information session on external reference prices for PSH.

2.8. Following the June meetings, I decided to focus the discussions in July on Domestic Support and PSH, as these are the two topics to which most of the Members have ascribed priority and that have attracted most attention. I therefore circulated two outlines listing various approaches for several key elements deriving from recent submissions. These outlines did not purport to fully capture all Members' positions and past inputs and it was made clear that they were without prejudice to Members' positions. Their objective was only to stimulate substantive and more granular discussions, without providing any sense of direction regarding a possible outcome. Members were encouraged to suggest new approaches. I also stressed that similar approaches would be followed for other negotiating topics, also building upon submissions and inputs by Members, as commensurate progress would have to be made on all negotiating topics to reach a balanced outcome at MC13. I was encouraged by the level of engagement demonstrated by Members during our June and July meetings. I want in particular to commend Members for their thorough and interactive exchanges when commenting on the various approaches on Monday and Tuesday this

week. Considerable work has thus been done since the beginning of the year and the nature of our discussions has changed since our June meeting. But I do not underestimate the existing divergences, including on how to best address the food security challenge and the complexity of the negotiating topics before us. A lot more remains to be done and we have little time left before MC13.

2.9. Food security also remains on the top of our agenda. The new numbers released last week by the FAO and other agencies showing that around almost 9 percent of the world population are facing hunger confirm the gravity of the situation. Members have confirmed on many occasions their shared willingness to take a significant step at MC13 following the emergency response to food insecurity agreed at MC12. The question before us is not whether but how we can translate this commitment into concrete action. MC13 will not be the end of the road. But it can and should be an important milestone confirming that the WTO is back on track and working towards achieving a fair and market-oriented agricultural trading system, ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture and food systems, as reaffirmed by Minister at MC12. The negotiation process is and will remain Member-driven and I once more invite Members to engage with one another, building upon the constructive spirit demonstrated at our meeting earlier this week. I will on my side spare no effort to support this process. The 25-26 September CoA SS meeting will be important, as it will set the tone for the next five months we have left before MC13. I therefore invite the proponents of various topics to consider introducing new inputs and submissions before this meeting and to engage in outreach with other Members as soon as possible. It will be followed by the Senior Officials meeting scheduled on 23-24 October that will also constitute a critical milestone in providing direction to our work.

2.10. Ambassador Kadra Ahmed Hassan (Djibouti), Chairperson of the Special Session of the Committee on Trade and Development (CTD SS), delivered the following report:

2.11. When we last met in this format in April, I had reported on the formal CTD SS meeting that took place in March. At the March meeting, the CTD SS agreed on a process proposed by the G90 to advance work on the ten Agreement-specific proposals (ASPs) on S&D. The process consists of a series of formal meetings to have in-depth discussions on each of the ASPs, complemented as necessary by informal meetings and technical workshops. The G90 had also indicated at the March meeting that it would be making further textual submissions on each of the ASPs, starting with the proposals relating to the SPS and the TBT Agreements. Accordingly, the G90's textual submission on the ASPs concerning the SPS and TBT Agreements was circulated in May. A formal CTD SS meeting was convened on 7 June to allow the proponents to introduce the new submission and to have a discussion on it.

2.12. The meeting in June also allowed me to explain how I intend to take forward the agreed process in practical terms. I informed the Special Session that, after due consideration – and after taking on board the views and suggestions shared by Members – I will be appointing a number of facilitators to assist me in advancing the discussions on the various G90 ASPs. To be specific, a total of five facilitators will be appointed as we move through the process. Each facilitator will have responsibility for two ASPs. The facilitators will work with Members on the concerned ASPs under their responsibility with the ultimate objective of finding landing zones and areas of convergence. I am confident that the facilitators will conduct their work in a transparent, objective, impartial and inclusive manner. It will be for the facilitators to hold technical and focused discussions with Members on each of the ASPs, in informal settings. The facilitators will keep me regularly informed of the status of the discussions they are facilitating. Furthermore, the facilitators will provide an update on their work at each formal CTD SS meeting as we progress through the year. I additionally took the opportunity at the meeting in June to announce the first facilitator, which is Singapore.

2.13. As facilitator, Singapore has the responsibility for the ASPs concerning the SPS and TBT Agreements. Let me once again express my sincere thanks and appreciation to Singapore for having agreed to take on this role. I understand that the facilitator from Singapore recently met bilaterally with any delegation that so wished, in order to hear views on how to structure the informal work on the ASPs concerning the SPS and TBT Agreements. Following from the discussions in these bilateral meetings, the facilitator intends to hold two informal experience-sharing workshops in the week of 2nd October – one for SPS and one for TBT. As for the other facilitators, I will nominate them as and when the additional textual submissions by the G90 on specific ASPs are submitted. Depending on how the discussions advance, we can eventually expect technical and focused work to be taking place simultaneously on all ten ASPs. Nevertheless, the CTD SS will remain the overall coordinating body for horizontal discussions on the ASPs and where reports by the facilitators will be made.

2.14. I would like to reiterate once again that we are dealing with important issues in the CTD SS. The issues that are contained in the ten ASPs are not only important to the proponents and other developing countries but are also systemically important to the organization as a whole and the entire Membership. I therefore encourage all Members to participate actively and constructively in the upcoming discussions organized by the facilitators, as well as in future discussions in the CTD SS, and to engage in good faith and with an open and results-oriented mind with a view to achieving concrete outcomes. I am confident that, with the right amount of political will, delegations can find solutions to their respective concerns and challenges, and that we will be able to deliver on the broader political mandate received from our Ministers in view of reporting to them at MC13.

2.15. The Trade Negotiations Committee took note of the reports of the Chairpersons of the bodies established by the TNC.

3 REPORT BY THE CHAIRPERSON

3.1. The Chairperson noted that, before proceeding to her report, the General Council Chairperson would like to say a few words concerning MC13 Administrative Matters and the conduct of the July General Council meeting.

3.2. Ambassador Athaliah Lesiba Molokomme (Botswana), Chairperson of the General Council, delivered the following report:

3.3. As the Director-General indicated in the airgram convening this meeting, the work of the TNC/HoDs complements and is in full coordination with the work and broader ongoing consultations by myself as the Chairperson of the General Council on the work ahead. I shall therefore use this the opportunity to briefly update all delegations on a few matters ahead of the General Council meeting scheduled for next week. First, as I indicated in the Informal Meeting on WTO Reform which took place on 16 June and in a communication sent to all delegations on 30 June, I have been holding consultations on a range of matters related to preparations for MC13, including WTO Reform follow-up. In particular, I asked delegations to share their views on an emerging roadmap to MC13 on the deliberative function, including major milestones, priority topics to be taken up and expected outcomes. I take this opportunity to thank all delegations that have come forward to consult with me. I will report in full on these consultations at to the General Council next week. As I also shared during my consultations, there are a number of administrative matters related to MC13 that the General Council will take up next week – which are listed on the agenda of the General Council meeting under Item 2. These are:

- a. Election of Officers
- b. Attendance of Observers
- c. Attendance of NGOs

3.4. On the Election of Officers, as delegations are no doubt aware, the past practice has always been that a Minister of the Government hosting a Ministerial Conference is elected as Chair of the Conference. For MC13, at the General Council meeting, I would therefore propose to repeat this past practice, and that the General Council agrees to elect H.E. Dr Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, Minister of State for Foreign Trade of the United Arab Emirates – the host Government – to chair the Conference. I trust that this will be welcomed by all delegations. In this regard, let me inform you that Minister Al Zeyoudi is planning to visit Geneva for the General Council meeting and to address the Council on that occasion. We look forward to welcoming him to the Council. Concerning the three Vice-Chairs, in line with practice, I intend to invite the representatives of the other three broad groupings – i.e., Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC) and the developed countries – to consult with their constituencies so that we can revert to this matter at the following General Council meeting and appoint the Vice-Chairs at that time. We will not yet take a decision on the MC13 Vice Chairs at next week's GC meeting. Regarding the attendance of Observer governments, at the GC meeting next week, my intention is also to propose that the General Council agree to repeat past practice – that is to invite the governments with regular observer status in the General Council, plus the following five Governments which have previously been granted observer status only at Ministerial Conferences: Cook Islands, Eritrea, Niue, San Marino, and Tuvalu.

3.5. Finally, regarding the Non-Governmental Organizations, their attendance has been governed by a procedure agreed by the General Council in 1996. This procedure is as follows:

- a. a limited number of accredited NGO representatives are allowed to attend only the Plenary Sessions of the Conference, without the right to speak;
- b. applications from NGOs are accepted on the basis of Article V, paragraph 2 of the WTO Agreement, i.e. NGOs "concerned with matters related to those of the WTO"; and,
- c. a deadline will be established and communicated for the registration of NGOs. Once the registration procedure is finalized, the Secretariat will circulate the list of registered NGOs to all Members. On this matter also, I intend to propose that the General Council agrees to repeat this past practice.

3.6. Before I conclude, as delegations have no doubt seen, we have a long agenda for the GC meeting next week, which includes several communications – many of which are relevant in part or in full to the work of a number of WTO bodies. In this regard, I join the Director-General in welcoming and commending Members' interest to discuss the matters. However, this raises the question on how we can effectively utilize the WTO bodies to discuss matters which are relevant to their work – and maximize the efficiency of General Council meetings. I therefore invite delegations to reflect on this and how we can all contribute to achieving this goal. In addition, for those items already introduced and extensively discussed in previous meetings of the General Council, I would like to urge delegations to focus their interventions next week on changes or new developments as much as possible and as applicable. Let me also take this opportunity to confirm that, at the General Council meeting next week, I intend to continue to apply the same elements on the duration of interventions. Given the long agenda, I urge all delegations to prepare for the meeting with this in mind. Finally, and in the context of efforts to improve the conduct of work and functioning of WTO bodies, including the General Council, and in an attempt for reform by doing for the General Council, an annotated agenda has been circulated for the first time, to assist delegations with the preparations for the meeting. I hope you find it useful.

3.7. The Chairperson delivered the following report:

3.8. Excellencies, when we return from the summer break, time will be short to the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) and MC13. We will have to work really hard on both process and substance to get us to a successful SOM and to MC13. If we get this right, it will be a boost for a successful MC13. So, I want to focus my report mainly on the road to the October SOM. I know delegations are rightly seeking clarity about this meeting ahead of the summer break. A number of questions have been posed to me and the GC Chairperson – Ambassador Athaliah Molokomme (Botswana). We will provide some responses today. Given this, my report will be a bit lengthy, and I seek your indulgence. If you will recall, the SOM was an idea put forward by several of you as a possible problem-solving milestone on the road to MC13. So, I also expected clarity and ideas on its preparation and conduct from you. What attracted me to the SOM idea was its inclusivity, all Members would be involved in the project of moving us along to MC13 – hence I picked up on it. You will also recall that my report on my consultations on this issue was circulated as JOB/TNC/109 – which I also referenced in the convening notice for today's meeting. Members agreed that the SOM idea was a good idea – with many preferring the autumn to the July window that I had suggested. The GC Chairperson and I therefore wrote to your Ministers, inviting Senior Officials with decision-making authority – Vice Ministers or Ministers of State, or, depending on the Member, Permanent Secretaries or Directors-General – to a two-day meeting on 23 and 24 October.

Objectives of the SOM

3.9. One of the questions that has been posed is about what we should try to get out of the SOM. First, I believe we should be able to draw some operational and political conclusions from the SOM that will advance our work and determine the level of ambition for MC13. This could be a combination of political direction as well as some specific decisions. At the end of day, what I think would be useful is having a clearer idea on what we are aiming for and the universe of things that we would be able to deliver at MC13. Having said this, we should also be careful that the SOM does not become a forum to close issues or negotiations off prematurely. There is always a risk, but we all need to collectively manage that risk well. That is why I believe we should wait a bit before setting the

agenda for the SOM – which many of you wanted to have by this TNC or next week's GC. As I mentioned earlier, Members are still working on several issues. I therefore think that we should come back after the summer break and use the month of September to work before setting a clear agenda around the beginning of October. This would give Senior Officials a full three weeks to digest and prepare. I will return to this issue when I outline next steps.

3.10. Across all negotiations, what I think will be helpful is for Senior Officials to take stock of where we are, including outcomes achieved at the level of the GC, what the challenges, gaps and opportunities are, assist us to narrow down realistic deliverables for MC13, and provide a clear signal that those are items that should get done. At the same time without foreclosing issues, Senior Officials can also signal where more work will need to be done beyond MC13 to get us to an outcome. I think Senior Officials need to come to Geneva not with wish lists and certainly not to map out well known positions, but with realistic expectations of what is truly doable. I will be expecting them to go a step beyond Ambassadors in moving the agenda along because they have decision-making stature and authority. Coming here to rehearse well-known positions would not be helpful – and would be a true missed opportunity. In addition to taking stock and mapping out deliverables, Senior Officials could also be expected to focus on some specific problems and solve them, so we can take them off Ministers' agendas, except for having them bless the outcome.

Possible topics

3.11. Now, some of the questions you have been asking relate to the agenda of the SOM and the level of ambition on the topics. As I have noted, it is still too early to provide a concrete response, given that you are still working, and we need to give it until the end of September. But here is a possible organizing principle for the agenda. Let me say that at this point, I cannot tell what we put under each of these categories, but I will put forward the organizing principles for our SOM agenda.

- a. First, is stocktaking. Here, the SOM would take stock of where we are on all issues. In this regard, it might be useful for the Secretariat to prepare a brief, factual state of play report for each of the MC12 outcomes that Senior Officials would receive in advance to assist them. This, together with updates during the SOM from the Chairs, facilitators and others assisting us with our work, would be the basis on which the stocktaking exercise would take place possibly in plenary session.
- b. Second is blessing of things already agreed by the General Council. Examples could be our Reform-by-Doing work – including the matrix on the state of play and LDC Graduation if we get it done before they arrive.
- c. Third is solving specific problems. Here, I do not know yet what these problems will – but they could emerge as we progress our work further in September and they could be related to the various negotiating strands. So, we will identify specific issues that Senior Officials would solve.
- d. Fourth, pointing the way to deliverables for MC13 for which Senior Officials can give a political push. Examples could include Fish 2, ratification of the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies Agreement – in other words, those things that are ripe or close to ripe or where you can give a direction of travel such as on agriculture, food security, and e-commerce moratorium, among others.

3.12. So, this is the organizing principle for our agenda and the way the work will be done. With this in mind, allow me to offer my reflections on some issues and then make suggestions on the way forward. On development issues, I believe that our target should be to deliver on LDC Graduation. I keep hearing you refer to this issue as a possible deliverable even prior to the SOM. Early this year, the LDC Group's aim was to have Annex 1 of their proposal agreed at the General Council in May. Other Members said July. Well, July is two-thirds of the way through. I understand that work is ongoing, and I thank Members who are working on this – but we cannot keep kicking the can down the road. If you cannot do this at next week's GC, then we should prepare the issue for a decision by Senior Officials. But we should be wary of trying to overload the agenda. We would want Geneva-based delegations to do as much work as they say they can do before some of these meetings take place.

3.13. On the other development issues, we have heard the report of the CTD SS Chair – Ambassador Kadra Hassan (Djibouti). Work in the CTD SS seems to have been rejuvenated through the facilitator-led discussions on the G90 Agreement-Specific Proposals on SPS and TBT issues. I have read these papers and I think there are reasonable requests that senior officials might be able to deal with. I understand that there are plans to do the same for the remaining ASPs. We will see how far we go on this. I also read the papers relating to the ASCM Agreement. At a 26 June Informal CTD meeting, Members shared views on possible development-related outcomes for MC13, and S&DT was one of the issues that was frequently mentioned. If we are aiming to achieve something on development for MC13, which we absolutely should, we need clarity on Members' expectations. This will allow us to use the SOM as a platform to focus our work in the lead up to Abu Dhabi.

3.14. On fisheries subsidies, I have received 14 instruments of acceptance of the Agreement, putting us close to one-third of what we need for the Agreement to enter into force by MC13. This is encouraging progress, and I truly believe that we can deliver on this. I want to thank those who deposited their instruments early. Since the last TNC, a few others have joined, the European Union, Nigeria, Belize, China, Japan, Gabon, and yesterday – Peru. It is great to see that acceptances are coming from a wide range of Members, including Members that are among the top fishing nations in the world. These ratifications send an important signal that Members are willing to get this done. I want to share with you why we, the Fish Team and myself, all keep on pushing on this. It is gratifying that when I pick up the phone to speak to a Minister, the first thing they do is to inform me on how far they are on their ratification process. That makes me hopeful. If we are to achieve our objective to enter this Agreement into force by MC13, we really need to continue and redouble our efforts. The WTO Secretariat remains ready to assist Members to accelerate their processes and has shared the straightforward template. I therefore hope that you will utilize part of your holidays to nudge your authorities, so that many Vice Ministers can bring instruments of acceptance in October. The Public Forum will also be a good opportunity for those who can do it even earlier. On the second wave of fisheries negotiations, from the report of the NGR Chair – Ambassador Einar Gunnarsson (Iceland), I recognize Members' hard work including textual proposals. I also took note of the cordial tone during Friday's HoDs which I attended. It seemed to me that people are willing to look at other's proposals and see what they can pull out of this. This is an indication about a willingness to deliver in this area which is positive. It does not mean that this is easy – there are still gaps – but there is a positive will. I thank all Members and our Chair in this regard. As the Chair has pointed out, this is a mature negotiating file. It is not a question of time but getting Members to a real negotiating mode with the political will to get to yes. I agree with the Chair that the SOM will be an important milestone in getting the strong political signals of how to get an outcome at MC13.

3.15. Regarding agriculture, as you heard from the CoA SS Chair – Ambassador Alparslan Acarsoy (Türkiye) – work has intensified. I acknowledge the Chair's optimism in the face of great difficulties and the plethora of proposals tabled. However, even though desire for outcomes in the agriculture negotiations is palpable – you can feel it from all of us – my impression is that divergences continue to deepen. We cannot ask Senior Officials for political guidance on the "how", unless we have determined the "collective what" that we are hoping to achieve. So, this is the homework for us, during the continuing round of negotiations, to work with Ambassador Acarsoy after the summer break so that we can determine the "collective what". This "collective what" looks at issues from both an agriculture and a food security angle. That food security angle has become even more acute given the upshot in global grain prices that we are seeing this week. So, we must be seen as an organization to be leaning into solutions that will help the world solve this problem.

3.16. On other areas which are critical for Members, especially as we prepare for MC13, dispute settlement reform remains a key priority. I commend Members for actively participating in the ongoing informal discussions, and particularly thank Mr. Marco Molina (Guatemala) for his efforts in this regard. I recognize that Members have recently put forward papers – and I know that many ideas are being exchanged in the informal process. Excellencies, let me say this again – we simply will not look credible if by MC13 we have nothing strong to show on DS reform. The absence of DS Reform is the single most important issue that I hear globally – giving this organization the name of being dysfunctional and behind, not being up to speed. It is not exactly true. Somehow it has been branded because of this which makes it difficult to show the many good things we are doing in other areas. So, we have to work hard at it because many of our stakeholders are watching us. I hope some success will help re-brand us. But let's give the informal process more leeway to work and Marco can then see where we are after we come back from the summer break and work until September. It would be important to agree to principles to guide the reform and what an outcome could look like, so we are able to know how to skin the cat.

3.17. As part of MC12 follow up, efforts should also be made to come to a mutually agreeable solution in line with Paragraph 8 of the MC12 TRIPS Decision. I understand the discussions continue in the TRIPS Council and I hope that we could report progress or achieve clarity on this matter so that Senior Officials can take action, as appropriate, when they meet. One of the things of concern to me is how we liaise with the ongoing Pandemic Treaty negotiations at the WHO which touch on the TRIPS Agreement. We are trying to work with the WHO to make sure that things are congruent. Many of the Members are also the ones negotiating this treaty. We will be depending on you to ensure that we have an outcome that is sensible given our own particular responsibility and what is being proposed in that treaty. I am also hoping that we can work at the technical level to help make sure this works well.

3.18. Work is also progressing on the overall WTO Reform under the leadership of our General Council Chairperson. I commend her for her efforts, including her work with the Membership on a roadmap to MC13 on the WTO's deliberative function. The Secretariat has also continued to support Members' reform by doing efforts – from procedural improvements to digital tools and support to delegates. They have also updated the reform by doing document in [JOB/GC/345/Add.1](#). At the 16 June retreat, I also noted that the TNC must utilize its oversight function to provide results-oriented momentum to ongoing negotiations. Making our meetings more meaningful is part of ensuring that the WTO remains fit for purpose. We have already implemented measures in this regard based on Members' suggestions – including on the convening notice and the structure of today's meeting. I therefore believe that for the SOM all reform-by-doing improvements – which have been a subject of the GC Chairperson's consultations, should simply be taken note of and blessed by the Senior Officials.

3.19. Work is also advancing on the E-Commerce Work Programme and Moratorium in the dedicated discussions facilitated by Ambassador Usha Dwarka-Canabady (Mauritius). I have heard from some that clarity on the moratorium and on how to move forward with the other topics taken up in the dedicated discussions will be key as we prepare for the SOM.

3.20. I have also looked at a number of papers and proposals from Members – some of which have been tabled to the GC and other WTO Bodies and it seems there is an increasing interest from different angles on forward-looking topics: trade, climate change and sustainability issues; inclusivity including MSMEs, gender and youth; industrial subsidies; technology; global value chains; and institutional matters, among others. These are subjects for deliberative sessions which are important. But given the framing for the agenda that I just announced, I am wondering, it looks to me unlikely that there will be time for Senior Officials to get into this. I therefore think that deliberative sessions should be prepared for Ministers. But I am in your hands on this one. If you think that Senior Officials should also be put into deliberative sessions, please speak up. Whatever the case, it will require preparation – including of concept papers with specific questions to be addressed which the Secretariat is willing to do to help prepare. We have already discussed on how to do it. I am open. I just want you to know that there are two days so we will have to organize this smartly if we want to include deliberative sessions which are vitally important.

Possible SOM structure

3.21. The other question where you have sought clarity about is how the SOM will be structured in a meaningful way. We had preliminary discussions about this, and I invite you to take a look at my report in [JOB/TNC/109](#), if you haven't done so. While some wanted a more interactive structure, akin to what we had in our recent retreats, it was clear that we could only put in place a concrete structure once we know the topics to be taken up and the expectations on them. Given that there is an expectation that the SOM should in addition to providing the necessary political push, also help us solve some specific problems. I think that the format should be designed with flexibility that enables senior officials to engage with each other to tease out the knotty problems. Here, I am reflecting on how best we can maximize the possibility of bilateral and small conversations, in addition to plenary sessions and breakout groups. We should provide space and time for senior officials to talk to each other and thrash out things amongst themselves. In designing a possible structure for the SOM, the principles of transparency, full participation and inclusion should be upheld. Members should have a chance to share their views.

3.22. In this regard, we could organize the SOM, starting in plenary where the Chairs and Facilitators will present state of play reports which Senior Officials would take note of – having also received a summary report before the Secretariat. Then, assuming we agree to take up say four

topics, just for example, we could organize four breakout groups on the four different topics happening simultaneously so that e Member in the four groups will have the chance to discuss e topic. Therefore, each group will spend two hours on a subject. There will be four facilitators who would rotate and talk to all other groups on the same subject. We will have people taking notes on the deliberations and the discussions in order to help the facilitator summarize overall what has emerged on these topics. If we do that and rotate facilitators among the four groups, e single Member would have had a chance to discuss e topic, and nobody will be left out. If we will have deliberative sessions, if you so decide, we will carve out a bit of the next day to run these deliberative sessions. We will then move to a closing plenary where we would share the outcome of what has happened in the group sessions, the problems that have been tackled, the results that the Senior Officials have come to, and give them a chance to comment on that. Then, we will have a wrap up report that sends us on the way to MC13. These are just suggestions before we go for you to mull on. In order to stimulate our thinking, we are suggesting this structure and this possible way of going about it so that people have a little bit of direction on the path we are traveling. Please feel free to give us feedback, suggest amendments, possibly better ways to do it. We just want to let you know that we have been giving it a great deal of thought.

Way forward

3.23. Summing up, Excellencies, I am beginning to have clarity about where we might go, especially given our MC12 mandates and the other emerging areas that Members wish to discuss. However, I know that for Members, it is early days, and you are still working on the issues. So, let's look to work in September when we get back, before setting the agenda. To assist this process, allow me to map out a potential journey from after the summer break to the SOM and MC13. In so doing, let me stress that the work in the TNC/HoDs complements and is in full coordination with the work led by the General Council Chairperson. We are truly keeping in touch and making sure that what we are doing is congruent. There is no doubt that technical work will continue to advance in respective negotiating or regular bodies under the leadership of our Chairs and facilitators. As a complement to these efforts, I intend to intensify my own consultative efforts as TNC Chairperson and Director-General through a series of informal conversations in various small group configurations. This with the aim of supporting the work of the chairs through free and frank exchanges outside the formal negotiating environment about where we are, where we are going and help iron out specific sticky issues. My plan is to have these consultations at least fortnightly until the SOM. I am envisaging to have the first consultation on 6th of September or thereabouts – before the Jeune Genevois break – and the following one on 28th September. These are suggested dates so I can move them.

3.24. Thereafter, the GC Chairperson and I have discussed the possibility that in lieu of convening separate TNC and GC meetings in October, we could jointly convene an Informal HoDs on 10 October to take stock of where we stand before the SOM on 23 and 24 October. We would use the October HoDs meeting to report to the Membership on our own consultations in various configurations. Our expectation is that based on these consultations, ongoing work in negotiating groups, regular bodies, and Members' own discussions, we should be in a position to outline three or four areas to be taken up at the SOM including deliberative sessions if you so decide. This HoDs would be an opportunity for Members to react to these suggestions, and we therefore expect Ambassadors to come prepared with the specifics for us to arrive mutually at an agenda. Thereafter, our task will be to write to your Senior Officials in the beginning of October providing details about how the meeting will be structured, the three or four topics to be taken up and the expectations on each of them. We must make sure that our Senior Officials come here with a clear agenda. These are busy people so we should be clear on what we want them to do and how we want them to work. We will work hard to make it so.

3.25. Following the SOM, I expect my consultations to further intensify to once a week. So, be prepared. We will then further take stock at the GC in November and adjust our roadmap accordingly. While I will aim to ensure broad representation in the smaller format meetings and I will want to have a mix of groupings, some will involve group coordinators. So, I will be counting on group coordinators to consult with their groups before once they know what we are going to discuss to bring their feedback and after to give them feedback on what was discussed. I do recognize that there are Members that do not belong to a group or have particular situations or where group positions are diverse or do not necessarily align. Let me assure you that I am cognisant of this – and will take account of this in my planning. So, this is the roadmap that I wanted to share for our work after the summer break. In closing, let me emphasize that at the end of the day, no

matter how structured a process might be or who leads it, what ultimately matters is the will of all Members to desire an outcome and work together to find solutions and deliver it. How you will engage is what will make the difference – after all, it remains a Member-driven process. So, while I have set out this roadmap, I will be counting on your commitment and full support.

3.26. The Trade Negotiations Committee took note of the reports of the General Council Chairperson and the Chairperson of the TNC.

4 STATEMENTS BY PARTICIPANTS

4.1. The representative of Cameroon, speaking on behalf of the African Group, delivered the following statement:

4.2. As we proceed towards MC13, and the October senior Officials Meeting to precede that, the Africa Group reiterates its call for conclusion of the numerous WTO development mandates that remain unfulfilled and for outcomes that confront our most pressing development needs and challenges. Such MC13 outcomes must contribute towards, and support our industrialisation objectives, and diversification of our economies, and enhance our productive capacities and potential. We meet a few days after the United Nations warned of a worsening state of food security with a particularly devastating and disproportionate impact on all regions of the African Continent. It is such realities that should urge us to redouble our efforts towards agricultural trade reform that will level the playing field and address the systemic causes of food insecurity which stem from historical and current imbalances in the Agreement on Agriculture. These reforms should also foster resilience to future food security crises and shocks. The African Group, therefore, continues to call for a food security and livelihoods package as a priority outcome at MC13 and has in this regard recently tabled submissions on domestic support reforms and SSM. A permanent solution on PSH remain an intrinsic part of this package, including an outcome on cotton. We also reiterate our call for meaningful outcomes on the MC12 mandate contained in paragraph 8 of the Ministerial Declaration on the Emergency Response to Food Insecurity.

4.3. The extension of the TRIPS MC12 Decision to cover therapeutics and diagnostics remains a key priority of the African Group and is long overdue. We call for an urgent Decision on this matter to be taken without further delay and in any event well before MC13. This is about saving lives and any linkages with other envisaged MC13 outcomes would be morally unjustifiable. The African Group remains committed to the full realization of the Fisheries subsidies negotiating mandate and SDG target 14.6 and continues to engage constructively in NGR discussions. The OCOF pillar with effective and appropriate S&DT is a cardinal element. The African Group is encouraged by the renewed spirit of engagement in the CTD-SS on the agreement specific proposals that were submitted by the G90 focusing on the TBT and SPS Agreements. We hope this positive development will also permeate discussions on the remaining 8 ASPs the G90 will be submitting. We also welcome the approach by the CTD-SS chair for facilitator-led processes to steer more detailed and technical consideration of possible landing zones.

4.4. WTO Reform is a high priority issue for the Africa Group, particularly as it relates to its development dimension and the urgent need for Africa to embark on a sustainable growth path and confront contemporary challenges and multiple crises. We envisage concrete outcomes at MC13 on our initiative and submissions calling for focused negotiations on select WTO Agreements to rebalance trade rules and availing policy space and tools in support of the industrialization, diversification, and structural transformation of our economies. In this regard, our most recent submissions to the General Council covering the ASCM, TRIMS, Transfer of Technology and the TRIPS Agreement refer. Indeed, where there are areas of convergence, those elements must be harvested at MC13, whilst those that require further engagements post-MC13 could be delegated to the General Council to decide on without necessarily waiting for MC14. Reforming the dispute settlement mechanism and restoring the two-tier system with the right to automatic appeal; ensuring accessibility and equitable participation remain priorities for the Africa Group. To this extent, the African Group is engaging actively and constructively in the current informal DS discussions. We call for a multilateral process with a clear roadmap towards achieving these objectives. We expect a fully and well-functioning dispute settlement system accessible to all Members by 2024 as mandated by Ministers.

4.5. The African Group is gravely concerned by the rise in unilateral trade-related environmental measures that will increasingly impact the exports of developing countries, particularly our Members. This includes the increasing arbitrary imposition of SPS measures with no clear basis in science. We call for conscious multilateral action and effort to ensure coherence of the WTO with relevant multilateral environmental agreements and principles therein, such as CBD. Lastly, on e-commerce, we reiterate our call for due attention to be paid to the development dimension of the Work Programme on E-commerce in line with the mandate set out in [WT/L/274](#). In summary Madame Chair, our priorities elaborated on in our statement that we consider important for the attention of Senior Officials and their guidance at the meeting of 23-24 October are the following:

- a. WTO Reform covering trade and industrial policy as well as dispute settlement reform.
- b. Agricultural trade reform, with key focus on food security and livelihood, and
- c. Trade-related environmental measures

4.6. We also trust Senior Officials will also be able to adopt an outcome on the overdue extension of the TRIPS MC12 Decision to cover therapeutics and diagnostics; and to also adopt a comprehensive outcome on LDC graduation; or at a minimum provide the necessary guidance. On the process and structure of engagements after the summer break, the African Group would like to underscore the importance of transparency and inclusivity. You can count on the constructive engagement by the African Group on all matters, and our support towards a productive and fruitful meeting of Senior Officials in October, and indeed a successful MC13 in February 2024.

4.7. The representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, delivered the following statement:

4.8. The Arab Group will not reiterate in detail its positions and priorities for MC13 as those are well known and have not changed since the previous meeting – and would instead respond to the agenda regarding the preparation of the October Senior officials' meeting. With the 13th Ministerial Conference seven months away, we stress the need to make the upcoming Senior Officials Meeting meaningful and fruitful. Members should work in a constructive spirit to expedite actions by fully engaging with each other to bridge gaps in certain areas that seem to be low hanging fruits, so that by autumn, senior officials can have concrete areas to engage on and be able to provide solutions that can lead to fruitful outcomes at MC13. This could happen, if members start working from now until the senior officials meeting on a focused agenda that lists the priority topics and the key areas that should be addressed by our senior officials and need urgent actions and solutions on a fast track, this is on one hand. On the other hand, Members also should identify issues that require political guidance and clarity for further focused work until MC13 and post MC13 including issues from MC12. The Senior official meeting should provide us with a clear road map and way forward to MC13 and post MC13. In terms of priority topics, the Arab group would like to highlight the following areas that need a clear road map including urgent actions and solutions by our senior officials in October:

- a. Food Security and Agriculture,
- b. Development and LDC Graduation,
- c. WTO Reform particularly Dispute Settlement Reform,
- d. Second Wave of the Fisheries Subsidies negotiations,
- e. Accessions, and
- f. The Work Programme on E-Commerce and the Moratorium.

4.9. The Arab Group stresses that the way in which the senior officials resume in October will be critical, as it will set in motion the trajectory of negotiations towards a meaningful and tangible results at the next Ministerial Conference (MC13). Finally, the Arab Group remains committed to work constructively towards meaningful outcomes in MC13 that would serve the interests of all WTO Members.

4.10. The representative of Kenya, speaking on behalf of the ACP, delivered the following statement:

4.11. This year, the ACP Group has been active, in particular in the negotiating groups on rules fisheries subsidies negotiations phase 2, agriculture negotiations, and with the G90 on the work of the CTD SS. We were pleased with the interaction in phase II of the fisheries negotiations and the manner in which the Chair is leading the process so far, which up to now, is inclusive and transparent. It so far does not appear to place any particular submissions above others, and is quite members-driven, allowing us time to hold bilateral engagements with each other and explore understandings and possible pathways to convergence. The ACP Group held 8 bilateral meetings that we initiated, and others that were requested by other delegates. Due to the lapse of time during the last Fish Week, the Group plans to continue with more bilateral meetings. The ACP Group finds that there are many elements in the different proposals on the table, as well as the ACP plus South Africa's submission. We hope that all Members will keep an open mind to draw out those threads that can make the right connections and solutions. We are aware that other proposals may be tabled soon, which we much welcome. These proposals warrant the same treatment and consideration. It is important to keep the focus at the WTO on what is in the WTO's mandate. The WTO is not a fish management or sustainable fishing organization. We successfully concluded the agreement on fisheries subsidies last year, and therefore this Agreement must not undermine good fisheries management practices. We need only to focus on the part that was intractable – overcapacity and overfishing. We are not addressing "capacity". It is overcapacity. While certain Members claimed last week that their interpretation is to address everyone and everything for the future, we must be careful to keep our sight on responsibility for certain subsidies contributing to Over-capacity and Over-fishing, massively depleting our global fish resources. Many of us are nowhere near Overcapacity or having the means to overfish and will not be in that position for decades to come. We must also respect the principles in the Law of the Sea and the WTO should not overstep to try and solve the problem or aspect of sustainability which is already in the domain of other institutions. Do no harm is another principle that we ask Members to keep at the centre of these negotiations.

4.12. For the Senior Officials meeting we must have a common understanding of how much we should agree on overcapacity and overfishing (OCOF) in this phase II negotiations. We may not be able to engulf all aspects of OCOF. At least we must achieve a discipline that targets the most egregious subsidization that has brought this issue to the WTO and SDG 14.6, in the first place. On agriculture, our priorities for MC13 are Domestic Support, cotton, PSH and SSM. We will, however, engage actively and constructively in the other areas. Importantly, MC13 provides an opportunity to discipline Blue Box support and strengthen Green Box provisions to prevent circumvention of domestic support disciplines. Delivering on cotton is long overdue. We should adopt specific modalities to progressively eliminate any use of Final Bound AMS as product-specific cotton subsidies, taking into account the unique challenge faced by cotton-producing members, including developing countries and LDCs. If we pursue disciplines on market access, it is important that we make sufficient progress on domestic support. Such disciplines must include S&DT for developing countries, LDCs and SVEs, make allowance for designation of special products, must seek to address non-tariff barriers, and deal with concerns on tariff escalation. The ACP Group has made a submission in RD/AG/115 on how we see the WTO contributing to resolving the food security issues of LDCs and NFIDCs in accordance with para 8 of the MC12 declaration on food insecurity.

4.13. Regarding the CTD-SS Agreement Specific Proposals, these are long overdue as well. We applaud the Chair of CTD-SS, Ambassador Kadra Ahmed Hassan, for her efficient process to deploy facilitators to help gather the elements for reporting back to her and working with us to find targeted agreement on the different proposals. After the facilitators report back to the Chair, we might start to forge elements for agreement in the next semester before the close of the year. This way we can gauge what we can take to MC13. Paragraph 10 of the MC12 Outcome Document acknowledges "the need to facilitate the increasing participation of developing members, including LDCs, in global services trade, including by paying particular attention to sectors and modes of supply of export interest to them." In this regard, the ACP Group notes the recent launch of the WTO-World Bank publication entitled Trade in Services for Development. We recommend that informal meetings or information sharing sessions be convened in the fall to have discussions on the topics covered by the publication, with a view to finding avenues for incorporating services in an outcome of MC13.

4.14. For both the Senior Officials meeting and MC13, it is important to address WTO Reform, both institutional and deliberative matters, as well as dispute settlement reform. Senior Officials should

be presented with a concrete plan to advance the work on institutional and deliberative reform through an appropriate vehicle, ideally a General Council appointed facilitator or facilitators. As you have mentioned, the Senior Officials should also be updated on the work already undertaken with respect to 'reform by doing', namely the improvements already to, and being implemented within the subsidiary bodies. However, it is important not to be overly ambitious and to narrow the scope of issues ahead of MC13, mindful of the multiplicity of proposals that are currently on the table, and which are forthcoming. Perhaps what would be helpful would be some guidance from the Senior Officials on which of the issues might be better resolved at the level of the General Council, with a narrower range of issues going to the Ministers. On dispute settlement reform, the Senior Officials should receive an update on the ongoing informal discussions. Well in advance of the Ministerial, this informal process must be formalized, and Senior Officials presented with a pathway towards formalization. Here, we note the forthcoming discussion at the next General Council based on the proposal by the Africa Group to formalize the process.

4.15. On preparations for the senior officials meeting and MC13, we have emphasised that our agenda should be targeted to what Ministers must address and cannot be addressed or completed in the General Council. The agenda should not be overly ambitious. We begin with the instructions from the last ministerial, and any other pressing areas we feel we must put before the Ministers. Only last year we were able to agree on a number of decisions and work proceeded accordingly this year to put us in a position to deliver what the traffic can bear. The E-commerce work programme and moratorium must also be taken up by the senior officials. There are those negotiating areas where action of Ministers may be required. However, we will see after the Senior Officials Meeting what negotiating areas can yield ripe fruit to bring forward to Ministers at MC13. The process must remain truly Member-driven, fair, inclusive and transparent.

4.16. The representative of Djibouti, speaking on behalf of the LDCs, delivered the following statement:

4.17. Areas of priority for us under the TNC, which could have elements in time for MC13 are in fisheries subsidies, overcapacity and overfishing component remaining from MC12, agriculture outcomes, and the CTD-SS. The Group commends them for their efforts to advance the negotiations ahead of MC13. The LDC Group participated actively in the work, including the consultations of the Negotiating Group on Rules and the Committees on Agriculture, and Trade and Development in special sessions. The LDC Group submitted a negotiating text [RD/TN/RL/171](#) in the framework of the Negotiating Group on Rules Phase 2 negotiations. It is based on our previous communications [TN/RL/GEN/193](#) and [RD/TN/RL/125](#), and on [WT/MIN\(22\)/W/20](#). Through this communication, we propose disciplines for certain forms of subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing and more particularly those granted to industrial fleets which are practicing distant water fishing close to, or within the exclusive economic zones (EEZ) of other Members, including LDCs. Furthermore, we are of the view that fishing activities related to artisanal, traditional, or small-scale fisheries as well as fishing activities, which predominantly exploit domestic fish stocks in developing country Members' EEZ should be exempted from future disciplines. Appropriate and effective special and differential treatment (S&DT) is critical to the mandate. In our view, our contribution constitutes a good basis for the second phase of the negotiations on fisheries subsidies.

4.18. On Agriculture, LDC Group would like to reiterate its commitment to establishing disciplines that promote fair trade in agricultural products, including cotton. As Net Food Importing Countries (NFIDCs), LDCs would like to be exempted from any commitments in any reform aimed at correcting agricultural market asymmetries. We urge Members to be more transparent in the provision of domestic support. With regard to the negotiations on the proposals on specific agreements, the LDC Group, as a member of the G90, encourages Members to engage constructively so that the series of meetings to discuss the ten G90 proposals. We must bear in mind paragraph 2 of the MC12 outcome document which states: "We instruct officials to continue to work on improving the application of special and differential treatment in the CTD SS and other relevant venues in the WTO, as agreed and report on progress to the General Council before MC13". The LDC Group thanks you for your report Madame Director General with regard to your reflections on the activity reports of the Chairs of the negotiating bodies and on the meeting of senior officials to be held next October.

4.19. Now, allow us to address the two questions in the order in which they were asked. We congratulate the WTO Secretariat and in particular the Director-General for considering, in keeping with the Member-driven nature of the WTO, the organization of the meeting of senior officials next October. It is a good initiative not only to test the ground a few months before MC13, but also to

prepare it for the Ministers in order to facilitate the success of the said conference. Priority topics for LDCs including decisions in the MC12 outcome document calling for reporting or recommendations to MC13. These relate to paragraphs 2 and 8 of the said document, paragraph 8 of the Ministerial Decision on the TRIPS Agreement paragraph 8 of the Ministerial declaration on the urgent response to food insecurity. The implementation of decisions adopted at previous sessions of the Ministerial Conference identified in paragraph 8 of the MC12 Outcome documents should be reviewed at the senior official meetings and should also be part of the agenda of this meeting. Then, the senior officials meeting should focus on Agriculture, including cotton, fisheries subsidies, the conclusion of agreement specific proposals in the CTD SS, and the WTO Reform we applaud Members that have been working with us on our proposal containing practical approaches on the functioning of the secretariat and committees to improve our participation in the regular bodies. We specifically thank those delegations that have cited our submission, thus recognizing our contributions and offensive interest on the reform agenda. There are other elements we hope that Members will take on board, The reconstitution of the Appellate Body is an interest for us in institutional reform of the WTO. The LDC Group has placed the utmost priority on agreement on our graduation proposal in the General Council next week. We thank all delegations working with us to find solutions. We are encouraged by our engagements so far and working with our esteemed Chair of the General Council Ambassador Molokomme.

4.20. During the fall, we should focus our efforts on a package, a set of topics of importance to members. Topics of importance to LDCs should be prioritized. Small group meetings have been helpful so far in the NGR, with the listen and view mode to ensure inclusiveness. This could be replicated for the Senior Officials Meeting. Small groups do make it possible to strengthen mutual understanding between members on the subjects under negotiation in order to build consensus. We look forward to text-based interaction in the fall before the senior officials meeting. Furthermore, the negotiation processes would benefit from the engagement of senior officials on negotiating texts from the chairs instead of a multitude of proposals. Before concluding, the LDC Group urges the WTO Secretariat to finance senior LDC officials to ensure effective participation of the group. In conclusion, the LDC Group wishes to renew its constructive engagement in the preparatory work for MC13 in order to contribute to the success of this event.

4.21. The representative of Barbados, speaking on behalf of CARICOM, delivered the following statement:

4.22. Our overall assessment is that intentions are good, momentum is fair, and some gaps remain wide. We do not have a lot of time. But we do have some time which we must use intelligently and strategically. The Senior Officials Meeting will be key. It needs to be arranged so that the focus is on precision of discussion while also allowing space for bilateral engagement. It will be a stress test for MC13, and we need to approach it carefully. It will need to continue to be governed by pragmatism but with our shared principles of being Member-driven, inclusive, transparent and with consensus at the forefront. Senior Officials should address issues that require political guidance and provide clarity for further focused work for MC13, including issues not resolved from MC12. Do not overload the agenda but also be cognizant of what are top tier priorities for all members. It is a balancing act that must be achieved. We agree with your broad contours: Report on MC12 outcomes, updates from Chairs and Facilitators, blessing of things agreed by GC such as LDC graduation and matrix of reforms by doing; and pointing way to deliverables for MC13. In terms of issues, we would value having political guidance on the Ecommerce Work Programme and Moratorium.

4.23. On Fisheries Subsidies we remain pleased with the level of transparency demonstrated to date, look forward to proposals being submitted at the earliest, and to the next stage. The Chair has set an ambitious roadmap of meetings for the Fall and here we ask the Secretariat to be sensitive to not scheduling other meetings of interest to small delegations during some of the key negotiating periods. The reality is that the OCOF pillar is the most difficult element of the fisheries subsidies mandate to reach consensus on because it is the most meaningful for people and planet. The ACP position on adequate S&DT including through a de minimis approach remains our priority. On WTO Reform- for us there is reform with a small 'r' and reform with a big 'R'. For little 'r' we are making good progress through "reform by doing" which should remain the purview of Ambassadors in the General Council. On reform with a big 'R'- the biggest is clearly the discussions on Dispute Settlement Reform. We take note of the progress made in the ongoing informal process. We must have at a minimum, a transparency session with senior officials in October and seek their guidance on how to move forward on this critical time bound issue. On Agriculture we have a series of issues: SSM, Food security for LDCs and NFIDCs, and Special and Differential Treatment G90 Agreement Specific

Proposals. I commend the work of the Chair of the CTD SS and the facilitator on the TBT and SPS proposals and thank Members for their enhanced engagement on the G90 ASPs. On Investment Facilitation for Development. We need to find a way to anchor this multilaterally. Barbados was among 18 developing countries to have requested a Self-Assessment Guide. These are similar to the needs assessments carried out during trade facilitation negotiations and will be crucial in helping us map out next steps. There are a few other issues that warrant mention – continued support for the Small Economies Work Programme, a need to have agreement on the LDC Graduation requests – these should be agreed to in the GC.

4.24. And although these are not part of the formal work streams of the WTO- the discussions in the MSME Working Group, the Trade and Gender and TESSD warrant acknowledgment by interested senior officials. And I take this opportunity to inform that these 3 groups are coming together on September 25 to have a solutions lab event on Women-led MSMEs, Trade and Climate Change – Adapting and Investing for the Future. In terms of how to capture these at the SOM – perhaps a factual note based on a common format showcasing state of play could be a minimum form of transparency to senior officials given the moderate time frame we are working around. We all know we must seek to accelerate our work after the summer break and focus our attention on a priority basket of issues for a programme of work for the agreed shortlisted issues. This does not mean that we stop working on areas that are not included in the priority listing, rather, we should continue our active deliberations on other areas of work in an effort at reaching the same level of maturity as those which have been elevated to Senior Officials. We are in broad agreement of how you have set out what the SOM meeting could look like, but we would discuss this with our CARICOM, SVEs and ACP colleagues to decide best way forward. But please remember the capacity constraints of developing countries, particularly those with small delegations and who are accredited to other organizations in Geneva. How wonderful it would be if other agencies in Geneva agreed not to have any major high-level events on the two days of the Senior Officials meeting. DG, I leave that with you to gently nudge your compatriot heads of agency on this.

4.25. The representative of Vanuatu, speaking on behalf of the Pacific Group, delivered the following statement:

4.26. We align with the ACP Statement. It is evident from the Negotiating Group Chairs' reports that while work is gathering momentum, much work remains ahead of us. We only have six working months left before MC13. We need to work constructively and collaboratively to advance discussions and ensure we deliver concrete outcomes in Abu Dhabi. We also welcome the convening of the Senior Officials Meeting in October, which should provide clear political guidance from Senior Officials on expected outcomes at MC13. For the Pacific Group, our utmost priorities for MC13 include fisheries subsidies, agriculture, development issues, and WTO Reform. We think that these issues could be the focus of the Senior Officials Meeting in October. On Fisheries Subsidies, like many Members, the Pacific Group continues to prioritise the second wave of negotiations. The comprehensive agreement we aim to conclude by MC13 must fully meet the mandates of SDG 14.6, MC11 and MC12. It must address subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing (OCOF), in particular, those subsidies provided to large-scale fishing including distant water fishing. We refer to our statement at the closing plenary of the Fish week held last Friday. Also, we thank the Chair for the report delivered at closing plenary of Fish Week last week and circulated on 17 July 2023. We welcome the Chair's intention to circulate a draft text after summer. This draft could be further considered by Senior Officials in October, or at least a few elements of the text that could reach consensus. We should work constructively during the four fish weeks to progress negotiations and support the Chair's aim to conclude textual negotiations by December. We also reiterate that we do not want a repeat of MC12 Green Room process at MC13. We also welcome the launch of work to consider the rules of procedures and setting up of the Fisheries Committee. We congratulate Ms. Josefina Bunge of Argentina, as she takes up her role as Facilitator to progress this work. We note that a structured list of topics will be developed and shared with Members, and that a Workshop to understand the SCM Committee procedures will be organized in late September. We look forward to participating in the planned Workshop and further meetings in this workstream.

4.27. On Agriculture, we consider the pillars of Domestic Support, PSH and SSM as our priorities in the negotiations. We note there is still some work to do to bring about some agreement among the proponents of the various proposals on how to proceed in the negotiations. The Pacific Group is still examining the proposals on the table. We expect that the WTO's response to the food security challenges we continue to face as Net Food-Importing Developing Countries (NFIDCs) is prioritised. We also acknowledge the role that trade could play, as a tool to advancing the food security

objectives of our Members. On Development issues, we continue to support the work on improving the application of special and differential treatment (S&DT) in the WTO to be precise, effective and operational. We welcome the appointment of Mr. Loh Jia Jie of Singapore as Facilitator for progressing the G-90 Agreement-specific proposals related to SPS and TBT Agreements. We also take note of the intention to hold an experience-sharing workshop in October on these two areas. Also noting the LDC proposal on smooth transition, we strongly support a decision on this item preferably before MC13. This could be an outcome to be adopted by the Senior Officials in October.

4.28. On WTO Reform, the Pacific Group stresses its position for an open, transparent and inclusive process for discussions, as well as the need to meet the MC12 mandate to restore a fully and well-functioning dispute settlement system that is accessible to all Members by 2024. Perhaps a focus on the Dispute Settlement reform could be considered for the Senior Officials Meeting, given the mandated deadline. Also noting the many reform proposals on the table, we believe a structured work programme on this issue could be delivered at Abu Dhabi for implementation post-MC13. We are aware that there are MC12 decisions that refer to MC13 as the deadline for much of our work. Therefore, we cannot stress enough the need to structure the work ahead in the remaining six months. We urge the respective Chairs, Facilitators and Secretariat to ensure that there are no clashes in key negotiating meetings to allow small Missions such as ours to actively participate. To conclude, the Pacific Group stands ready to engage constructively with all Members to deliver meaningful outcomes at MC13. We take this opportunity to wish you all a restful summer break and to come back refreshed for the work ahead.

4.29. The representative of Nigeria delivered the following statement:

4.30. At the outset, we wish to associate ourselves with the statement delivered by Cameroon on behalf of the African Group and the statement by Kenya on behalf of the ACP. Let me begin by assuring you of Nigeria's commitment towards ensuring a successful MC13. As we approach the Senior Trade Officials Meeting which we believe would lay a strong foundation for a successful MC13, we call on Members to prioritize the delivery of Development Centred outcomes that would rebalance trade rules, unlock productive capacities in Developing Countries and broaden the circle of prosperity. Africa is on the throes of a food crisis not seen before in recent times. UN Agencies consistently draw attention to the deteriorating acute food insecurity situations in Africa and Nigeria is classified as hunger hotspot of highest concern. The sustained erosion of the competitiveness of African producers due to the growing use of trade distorting domestic subsidies by developed countries, as well as the inability of Developing Countries to support production and farmers' livelihoods through necessary subsidies constrained by AoA are combining to create a food crisis of unprecedented proportion in Africa. Consequently, our priority in the ongoing Agriculture negotiations is to secure outcomes that would underpin Domestic Support reforms that are needed to level the playing-field and foster fair global agricultural markets. We are also seeking outcomes that would respond to the immediate and urgent challenges of food insecurity and loss of livelihoods. On Fisheries Subsidies, the need for adequate policy space through effective S&DT to foster sustainable development of Developing Countries Fisheries sector cannot be overemphasised given the severity of food and livelihood difficulties faced by these countries. We believe that the necessary baselines should be re-established on the basis of submitted proposals. Ideally, a chair's text should focus on disciplining largescale industrial fishing in its totality. We believe that the first step would be to identify effective disciplines on subsidies to large scale fishing including distant water fishing. This can be achieved by setting out effective criteria and principles such as the polluters pay and common but differentiated responsibilities principles that are relevant to disciplining such subsidies. The second step would be to identify effective S&DT bearing in mind that small scale and artisanal fishing in small developing countries do not contribute to Over Capacity and Overfishing (OCOF) and therefore should not be subject to the discipline. On Dispute Settlement Reform, we believe that the general reform process including the dispute settlement reform should continue to be member driven. Therefore, it is of critical importance that discussions on this issue remains open, transparent and inclusive. The reforms discussions should be geared towards addressing the difficulties undermining the credibility of the Dispute settlement system as well as address the challenges with effective participation of Developing countries especially LDCs in the WTO Dispute Settlement System. It is equally important to develop a clear framework that contains the scope and ToR on the parameters of discussion on the WTO Dispute Settlement Reform agenda in a formal and multilateral setting. On TRIPS, we welcome the inclusive and transparent nature in which the Chair has conducted her consultations and we stand ready to engage constructively. Regarding Paragraph 8 of the Ministerial Decision, we believe that intensive work and discussions ought to be undertaken by the entire membership to ensure the delivery of the mandate which is to extend the TRIPS waiver

decision on COVID-19 Vaccines to therapeutics and diagnostics in a timely manner so as to address the challenges of developing countries and least developed countries in the fight against COVID-19 Pandemic. Finally, on TRIPS Non-Violation and Situation Complaints, we believe that this should not apply in the context of the TRIPS agreement as this was not the intention of the Members in the agreement.

4.31. The representative of Colombia delivered the following statement:

4.32. Colombia wishes to make four points regarding its preferences in the ongoing negotiations. First, with regard to agricultural negotiations, we consider it essential for progress to be made in reducing and limiting domestic subsidies by MC13 in order to level the playing field. Several Latin American countries submitted a position paper on this issue for discussion at next week's meeting of the General Council. Going further, Colombia would like to point out that Costa Rica's proposal on domestic support for agriculture is the way forward. It is the best proposal in years, and we believe that a serious and committed discussion in this regard is a prerequisite for any progress to be made at MC13. Second, we must deepen our discussions on intellectual property and medicines. The protection of intellectual property rights must be balanced with other key public policy objectives, such as human health or the fight against environmental degradation. In this connection, Colombia supports the extension of the waiver, but above all, we support a conversation that is aligned with the discussions that are taking place at the WHO in relation to the pandemic treaty. In the end, we need to have an "open trigger", which allows the waiver to come into operation immediately in the face of any new pandemic, without us wasting extremely valuable time in new negotiations. Third, Colombia supports the idea of having a mechanism to discuss industrial subsidies. Industrial subsidies are skyrocketing, and small and medium sized countries cannot match the amounts of resources granted by large economies. Colombia shares and supports the need for such a mechanism, as expressed in the document circulated by the European Union at the most recent General Council meeting. This discussion must not cover topics that are off limits but must take into account the environmental impact of the proliferation of subsidies in recent years, as well as the ideas of the African Group and others in this regard. Fourth and lastly, in line with the above, we would like to highlight explicitly the scope and high level of the wave of proposals made by the African Group in recent weeks, which Colombia in principle welcomes as a necessary step toward a balanced and successful MC13. These are our priorities in the negotiations under way, and you can count on Colombia on the road to MC13. A special greeting and the best of wishes to Anabel González in her future undertakings.

4.33. The representative of Brazil delivered the following statement:

4.34. As a developing country, Brazil wants a strengthened and modernized WTO that fully incorporates development and SDGs in its agenda. In that process, MC13 is an opportunity, but also a test: a test of our collective wisdom to safeguard the multilateral trading system into the future. Retreats, ministerial gatherings, and senior official meetings next semester must have clear objectives. The goal for MC13 is to have a WTO fit for new challenges, while addressing longstanding issues such as the agriculture reform mandated in Article 20. Food security and agricultural trade must go hand in hand since meaningful outcomes in both areas require a broader discussion over domestic support. Developing countries, especially LDCs, need increased food production and stronger participation in global food trade, something that will not be achieved while large players have access to effectively unlimited subsidization. For the MC13, Brazil wants a debate on domestic support which leads to effective food security now and in the future. Together with many Latin American partners we will deliver an important joint message on these subjects in the next GC. WTO Reform, especially dispute settlement reform, remains a priority for the Brazilian government. Brazil is fully engaged in the ongoing informal process on dispute settlement reform. We thank the facilitator for his efforts to move the process forward while keeping it inclusive and transparent. To reach our goal of having a fully functioning dispute settlement system by 2024, we must avoid a proliferation of issues and focus on the critical aspects that need to be resolved to achieve a permanent solution to the crisis. Regarding the other aspects of WTO Reform, we thank the Chair of the General Council for the reform retreat in June. We need to show results and harvest a number of institutional improvements by the next General Council. Environmental sustainability is also a key issue, but it cannot be used as a cover for unilateralism and protectionism. Moreover, it cannot be used as an excuse for discriminatory policies and subsidies that generate unfair competition, widen the gap between rich and poor countries, and exacerbate excess capacity, ultimately harming the environment itself. Brazil welcomes the African Group's document on "policy space", which encompasses not only industrial subsidies and policies, but also IP rights and investment measures.

In September's retreat, we must have a horizontal discussion on subsidies, both agricultural and industrial subsidies. In line with the African Group document, we must also have a serious discussion on the TRIPS agreement and its relation to industrial policy and development. Intellectual Property rights are part of industrial policy deliberations and can be tools to support not only sustainable development and the fight against climate change, but also needed transformations in global production and trade patterns. Annual WTO Ministerial Conferences would enable us to better engage collectively and to provide political guidance to the WTO, enhancing its responsiveness to longstanding and emerging trade issues. They would also better reflect the interests of developing countries, particularly LDCs, contributing to rebuilding much needed trust among Members. Brazil tabled document [WT/GC/W/882](#), which we will introduce in the next General Council.

4.35. The representative of the European Union delivered the following statement:

4.36. With just six months to go until MC13, we urgently need to put in place a clear MC13 roadmap to channel Members' contributions and structure the discussions in the different areas in preparation for the Senior Officials meeting (SOM) in October. We see the Senior Officials meeting as the first important opportunity for political discussions and to provide guidance on the critical areas for MC13, including on the MC13 ministerial statement. The agenda of the SOM could be structured around the following four key topics: dispute settlement reform, fisheries subsidies (phase 2), agriculture and new issues for deliberation. The Senior Officials meeting could also endorse some outcomes on WTO Reform. We see horizontal institutional improvements on the functioning of the subsidiary bodies as a candidate given that the various reform papers show some commonality. We also support an outcome on improvements of Ministerial Conferences/TNC/General Council, but for this to materialise, we would need a facilitator. The European Union also supports an outcome on the LDC Annex 1 graduation proposal for the Senior Officials meeting. A facilitator on LDC graduation could also be helpful.

4.37. First, I would like to thank the Chairs of the negotiating groups for their reports and important work they are carrying out in preparation for MC13. From the perspective of the European Union, we are looking for an ambitious, yet realistic package of MC13 outcomes that would also be a stepping-stone for more results at MC14. Such a package would include rulemaking and a reinforced deliberative function in critical areas on top of the MC12 mandates. Starting with dispute settlement, restoring a well and fully functioning dispute settlement system in the WTO is the top priority. We must aim for a landing zone agreement on DSU reform as a deliverable at MC13 and we cannot miss this political opportunity. The European Union is keen to see ongoing discussions continue in a result-oriented manner and start text-based discussion after the summer. By the time of the Senior Officials meeting in late October, technical discussions on the text should be sufficiently advanced to allow for political discussions. We place strong importance on an outcome on reinforced deliberation on trade and industrial policy, trade and environment and trade and inclusiveness. On trade and industrial policy, the European Union looks forward to discussions in the dedicated retreat in September to lay the foundations for subsequent engagement towards defining a work programme on trade and industrial policies, including the development angle, to be launched at MC13. On fisheries subsidies, we appreciate the hard work of Ambassador Gunnarsson to conclude the fisheries negotiations by MC13. We urge all WTO members to complete their ratification of the phase 1 Agreement so it can enter into force by MC13.

4.38. On agriculture, the European Union is concerned that with a few months to go there is still no convergence and no clear candidates for deliverables. The European Union calls on all Members to step up engagement on selected issues. It is clear that not everything will be possible, but it is important to look for deliverables, which strengthen the agricultural pillar and support WTO Reform. The Senior Officials meeting could be used as a convergence building moment. MC13 should provide guidance on reforming trade distorting domestic support, including for cotton, as well as on the permanent solution for the PSH, given their impact on food security. MC13 could also help providing guidance on reforms of agricultural policies taking account of both trade distortion and environmental sustainability. The current food security context requires us to look at a possible food security deliverable that could include advancement on export restrictions and transparency across all pillars. Looking ahead to MC13, the e-commerce moratorium extension and the development-focused e-commerce work programme also remain key priorities. We welcome the recent momentum in the work programme discussions. The moratorium is of vital importance for business both in developed and developing countries and of systemic importance to the WTO.

4.39. The representative of Samoa delivered the following statement:

4.40. Samoa appreciates the Director-General's thoughts and suggestions on how we could optimize the Senior Officials meeting in October and pave the road to a successful MC13. You spoke for 30 minutes, well worth the time as now we have a better understanding of how we can plan for the next few months and how we can organize ourselves better. It also now shortens my statement to just emphasise only a few key points. Firstly, your statement was packed with ideas and already responds to the two questions you posed or at least forms the basis of preparing for the Senior Officials meeting. The Senior Officials meeting is only for two days and therefore we have to be precise. The Secretariat can already prepare those stocktaking reports and have those available well in advance of the meeting. We found the dedicated sessions at MC12 useful but let us see how the suggested breakout groups could work. The mandate of the negotiating bodies reporting this morning cover priority issues – development, including improving the application of S&DT, the systemic challenges linked to WTO reform and agriculture. The concluding fisheries subsidies negotiations to discipline the harmful subsidies contributing to overfishing and overcapacity is in our view on top of the list of priorities. Senior Officials can consider fisheries in their meeting with a view of concluding the negotiations by December and receive the blessing of our Ministers at MC13. It is indeed a mature file and a low hanging fruit and as you have stated it does not require time but political, and if I can add, a genuine good will.

4.41. The representative of Antigua and Barbuda, speaking on behalf of the OECS, delivered the following statement:

4.42. We align with the statement by the ACP Group and the CARICOM Group. The OECS is pleased with the work being carried out by Ambassador Gunnarsson in the Fisheries Subsidies Negotiations. We commend Ambassador Gunnarsson for the demonstrable commitment to transparency and inclusivity which will continue to serve us well during the text-based negotiations in the fall. We take note of the many proposals on the table. The OECS is fully aligned with the ACP and South Africa proposal. It is important to have an agreement which imposes stringent prohibitions on those chiefly responsible for the problem of overcapacity and overfishing which based on the evidence, are large-scale industrial fishing nations. These are the nations that traditionally have had the wherewithal to provide massive amounts of economic incentives to their fishers to enhance their capacity to engage in overfishing. Therefore, we support straightforward prohibitions for these Members with little to no ability for them to circumvent the prohibitions under the guise of having management systems in place. Meanwhile, appropriate and effective special and differential treatment must be an integral part of a final outcome and while we support a list of options for developing and least-developed countries, we continue to repose our interest in a small players' or *de minimis* exemption with an appropriate threshold. The OECS will be part of shaping what we are confident will be a balanced and meaningful outcome on fisheries subsidies.

4.43. The Chair of the Committee on Agriculture in Special Session must also be commended for his work to date. This continues to be a difficult file as Members remain entrenched in their positions. There is a long laundry list of areas in which Members want to see meaningful outcomes on Agriculture at MC13. On our part, we believe that it is overdue for us to arrive at concrete outcomes on Domestic Support, Cotton, Public Stockholding (PSH) and Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM). The current state of global food security or insecurity, exacerbated by the climate crisis, geopolitics, inflation and other crises, necessitate a binding WTO outcome in these areas. Particularly on Domestic Support, it is extremely important to preserve, or possibly strengthen, those flexibilities available to developing Members to encourage agricultural and rural development. We recognize the tireless efforts of Ambassador Kadra to facilitate a meaningful outcome on the G-90 Agreement Specific Proposals on Special and Differential Treatment. We have a systemic interest in strengthening the development dividend of the WTO. We trust that by MC13, we can all agree on the elements which could constitute a package for Ministers to consider.

4.44. Ahead of and after the Senior Officials meeting in October, we need to determine those outcomes which would be good to have and those which are essential. For us, the essential ones relate to the E-Commerce Work Programme and the Moratorium; Fisheries Subsidies; Agriculture and Reform, including Reform of the Dispute Settlement System. We would like to see a less contentious approach to the discussions on the E-Commerce Work Programme and Moratorium. We call for pragmatism on this topic. We believe that Senior Officials can be updated on the good work being done by the Facilitator, Ambassador Canabady. However, we do not anticipate that Senior Officials will be able to make any definitive pronouncements on the Work Programme and Moratorium. On both Fisheries and Agriculture, we also anticipate that at best, Senior Officials will only be able to do a stocktake. These two issues will likely not be ripe to get concrete reactions from

Senior Officials. However, our objective should be to work in a manner up to MC13 where we reduce the range of outstanding issues to go before Ministers to the greatest extent possible. Concerning Reform, this is perhaps where Senior Officials may be able to take some concrete action. On the institutional and deliberative issues, we may want Senior Officials to help to narrow the scope of what will form part of a package for MC13. We may also want to get the endorsement of Senior Officials regarding the format for reform discussions going forward, whether that be through a facilitator or facilitators. Regarding the Dispute Settlement matters, Senior Officials should of course, receive an update on the informal process. However, we should also seek their endorsement of a roadmap to formalize this process ahead of MC13.

4.45. The representative of Switzerland delivered the following statement:

4.46. It is true that, as Chairman of the NAMA negotiating group, I have not had anything to report to the TNC for quite some time. Do not worry. I am not going to lament this calamitous state of affairs nor plague Members with a long valedictory statement. I would like to thank you, Director-General, for your kind words. They really touched me. I also much appreciated our good cooperation. I will remain a staunch defender of the multilateral trading system. But in other ways as I will have greater freedom to express my thoughts. Many thanks to all the colleagues with whom I have cooperated constructively. This is a page that is turning for me, a long and important phase of my life in which I have found a great deal of satisfaction. But it is with serenity that I approach a new phase in which I will devote more time to the passions that I have neglected during my professional life.

4.47. We would like to thank you for your report and your useful comments and suggestions on the Senior Officials Meeting. We also thank the chairpersons for their substantive reports. The SOM is an important step in the preparations for the ministerial conference. It must be carefully prepared if we are to make the most out of it. With this in mind, the consultations that you will be conducting after the summer break, as well as the progress in the various processes should shape the agenda of the SOM as well as the format of debates. We would suggest the following approach:

- a. Firstly, the number of topics should be limited to allow for in-depth discussions.
- b. Secondly, the issues that require an impulse from the senior officials to reach an immediate result should be identified. They are not many. The graduation of LDCs could fall into this category if not solved beforehand.
- c. Thirdly, for the other issues, the aim would be to identify a realistic level of ambition for the ministerial conference. This would be key to guide our work during the short time remaining before MC13.

4.48. In fact, we should answer the following two basic questions:

- a. The first question would be: Can we aim for a substantive and fully fledged or partial agreement on the issue at stake? For instance, the negotiations on fisheries subsidies should squarely fall into this category. The SOM could confirm that the objective is a fully fledged agreement on fisheries subsidies and that the text put forward by the Chairperson is the basis to achieve that goal.
- b. In case the answer to the first question is negative, the second question would naturally be: Should we seek a consensus on the way forward after the Ministerial Conference by adopting specific mandates or work programmes? For instance, on WTO Reform, the SOM could provide guidance on how to deal with issues of political importance, like the subjects raised in the submissions of the European Union and of the African Group.

4.49. These are the questions we need to ask ourselves as we prepare for the SOM. This applies in particular to the negotiating groups on fisheries subsidies and agriculture as well as to WTO Reform. With this in mind, the Chairpersons and other colleagues in charge of the relevant negotiations and processes should assess the situation and make proposals as to the realistic level of ambition for the Ministerial Conference. Senior officials would have an opportunity to comment on their proposals. And we would see if any trends emerge that would allow us to focus our subsequent efforts on realistic objectives. This would not call into question the objectives already clearly identified at MC12,

which would remain relevant. In this vein, MC13 will also be an important milestone for DSU reform. We welcome the progress made in the informal process facilitated by Marco Molina that we understand is continuing in this moment. We call upon all members to engage constructively in further narrowing down the issues to prepare a constructive restart after the summer break.

4.50. The representative of Australia delivered the following statement:

4.51. Australia has noted often that Abu Dhabi could be the first genuine WTO Reform Ministerial. Now it is clear that Abu Dhabi must be a big reform moment for this organization. The Conference must deliver on our top reform priority, restoring all Members' ability to resolve disputes with finality and it must launch our work on the future of the system to ensure we can respond to the big global challenges of our time. You asked us what our Senior Officials should address when they come here in late October. Our objective should be to have our Senior Officials review and shape as much as possible the emerging package of outcomes for MC13 – across dispute settlement reform, the deliberative agenda and rulemaking. Senior Officials should indeed engage in shaping the WTO Reform package – the real promise of Abu Dhabi. How? First, Senior Officials should engage in October on how we can advance convergence on the vital work of dispute settlement reform. Second, WTO Reform requires us to consider how the global trading system must evolve, or what is often described as the deliberative agenda. So, between now and the October Senior Officials' meeting, we should hold working groups or retreats that help us help our Ministers to define a deliberative pathway for this organization towards MC14 that Ministers can announce in Abu Dhabi. You also asked where we should channel our efforts in the fall. On rulemaking, we need to maintain our steady progress in coming months, following our three big wins over the last three years. In 2021, on services domestic regulation. In 2022, on fisheries subsidies and, just in recent weeks, on investment facilitation for development. Each concluded negotiation is a statement of confidence by the Membership in the WTO. Each is a statement of support for the multilateral trading system. Also on the rulemaking agenda, we heard encouraging reports today from both the fisheries and agriculture chair - and their efforts to move us steadily towards text is commendable. A fisheries second-wave deal is within reach, if we are all willing to work with sustainability as our guiding objective. This is crucial to all of us and particularly to our Pacific Vuvale, as the Deputy Prime Minister of Fiji said in this house just yesterday and Vanuatu and Samoa said earlier. Modalities on the reform of domestic support – essential to both food security and the climate fight – are also within reach, and the Cairns Group is playing its part. Thanks to Ambassador Acarsoy's efforts and some important proposals, a middle ground is starting to be sketched out. But as you said, Director-General, big divergences are still evident, and if we are to have a shot at success the four biggest subsidisers also need to get more seriously behind this effort and back it. And if we are to be true to our aim to use Ministerial Conferences more wisely, we should conclude the necessary work on rulemaking ahead of time, concluding what is possible on fisheries and agriculture subsidies by December for endorsement by our Ministers. Senior Officials should also be in a position to endorse a deliberative package to put to Ministers if we are to fulfil the reform promise of Abu Dhabi. We therefore agree with the idea you set out today that we hold deliberative sessions at Senior Officials on the topics that many have already mentioned in recent months – state intervention, trade and climate and inclusion and development. Senior Officials could then, if we work "smartly", as you challenged us to do, endorse the scope of that deliberative package to be agreed and even the recommendations to put to Ministers at MC13 as part of an Abu Dhabi Reform Declaration. We agree with the idea you mentioned of seeking concept notes to be drafted by the Secretariat and agree work should start on this now. In addition to the three topics that are often mentioned, we should continue to seek maximum progress on agriculture and food security - but, if we fail again on agriculture at MC13, we will need our Ministers to reflect on why we have failed and how to move forward. Ministerial engagement on that task would be even more important in that context. With a steadiness of purpose, we can and should make Abu Dhabi a genuine reform Ministerial by setting up the reform outcomes well in time, including at the October Senior Officials' meeting. On our rule-making work, we should not wait till then for a throw of the dice. Steady progress on rulemaking requires slow, deliberate advances. That's within all of our grasp, right here in Geneva.

4.52. The representative of Costa Rica delivered the following statement:

4.53. The work on fisheries subsidies and agricultural subsidies encourages us to believe that this will lead to a productive Senior Officials Meeting which will deliver tangible outcomes or progress at MC13. I thank the Secretariat for its commitment and for work it is doing and whose ideas have been presented to us today. You have the support of Costa Rica. We will engage in the consultations

that you arrange. On the priority topics to be addressed at the Senior Officials Meeting in October and our expectations for MC13, I would like to underscore five topics.

- a. WTO Reform, including the following priority areas:
 - i. The deliberative function of the organization,
 - ii. Ensuring that the dispute settlement mechanism is operational by 2024,
 - iii. Institutionalizing stakeholder participation in the Organization without changing the intergovernmental nature, led by WTO Members,
 - iv. The issue of responsible consensus, to which Singapore has made reference on other occasions,
 - v. We believe that the Organization must have a space dedicated to the discussion of new topics that can be incorporated into the Organization, where members can put forward topics and where they can be discussed and analysed in a transparent and constructive manner. We are not suggesting which body such a space should exist in, but we are proposing that discussions should begin on where such a space could be established.
- b. The second part of the Fisheries Subsidies Agreement.
- c. Developing outcomes, where we see LDC graduation as low hanging fruit.
- d. Continuation of the moratorium on electronic transmissions.
- e. Compliance with the Article 20 mandate of the Agreement on Agriculture to complete agricultural trade reform.

4.54. Agriculture is an issue that cannot be ignored by our deputy ministers in the run up to MC13, because the vast majority of Members have called for it and because we have the Article 20 mandate. In this regard, I would like to take the opportunity to reiterate Costa Rica's proposal on the reform of domestic support for agriculture. This proposal, which has been extensively discussed, has been widely recognized for its technical soundness and has received support of Members from different groups, at different levels of development, acting as the springboard for negotiations in which all Members can secure a positive result. This proposal, with its principles of progressivity and proportionality, aims to comprehensively address all types of domestic support, thereby opening the door to the possibility of a new agreement on agricultural reform and resolving critically important and relevant issues for the WTO:

- a. Improving food security,
- b. Supporting sustainability,
- c. Levelling the playing field in international markets,
- d. Driving the reform process forward and effectively addressing product specific support,
- e. Providing a permanent solution for PSH, and
- f. Providing a solution for cotton.

4.55. At the last meeting of the Special Session of the Committee on Agriculture, support for this proposal was strong, as was the request not to address the issue of public stockholding in isolation, but rather as part of the negotiations on domestic agricultural support. We know that other Members will have different lists of deliverables at MC13. For this reason, we believe that the Senior Officials Meeting should examine what is possible and what is not and move forward with trade-offs to allow Ministers to take the political decision on all issues. Costa Rica will continue to contribute

constructively in all areas of work toward MC13, seeking to build consensus and results that will ensure the WTO can remain relevant in international governance.

4.56. The representative of New Zealand delivered the following statement:

4.57. New Zealand sees the period ahead to MC13 as falling into three parts. We consider the Senior Officials meeting at the end of October should provide guidance on all three stages and crystallize our focus for MC13 and beyond. The first part is what we can and should be doing here and now in Geneva. We support efforts to move ahead on those practical steps to reform the functioning of the WTO that have received a large measure of support as this is what reform by doing is all about. We also encourage efforts to arrive at an agreement on Annex 1 of the LDC graduation proposal and appreciate the work a number of delegations are doing to enable a decision on this as soon as possible. Senior Officials will be expecting to achieve clarity about the focus of MC13, in particular, which issues Ministers should or could take decisions on at MC13 and what the forward work programme post MC13 should contain. Top of mind amongst this first set of issues, where we already have existing riding instructions from our Ministers, are completion of work on fisheries subsidies disciplines, agricultural trade reform and the restoration of a functioning dispute settlement. We believe that the Senior Officials meeting, when we have our Permanent Representatives and Capital based officials here together in Geneva, is the right moment to ask delegations tough and focused questions about their positions on the core issues and these core negotiations. We need to ask Senior Officials specific questions on the approach we take to the overfishing and overcapacity text, on how we progress agricultural domestic support and PSH side by side as we seek to meaningfully deliver on food security and what we expect for dispute settlement. Running through all of the above is the development dimension and the importance of ensuring the outcomes we achieve in these areas support the fuller integration of developing countries into the rules-based multilateral trading system. New Zealand has been encouraged that we have seen some new and creative proposals brought to the table in many of these areas in recent weeks, especially in fish and agriculture, and that efforts are being made to synthesize elements of these proposals to help achieve convergence. We encourage all delegations to approach these new proposals with fresh eyes and to bring that spirit to the Senior Officials meeting to help achieve the outcomes needed in these areas at MC13. We are also looking to the discussions in the lead-up to and at the SOM to help guide the way ahead for the post MC13 work programme. Realistically, some of the issues that we are working on or would like to work on in this Organization will require further discussion and participation before they are able to make major advances – and should form part of this post MC13 work programme. Given this, New Zealand will be looking to work hard with you including, on your informal consultations that you have mentioned, and all other colleagues to get as much done as we can in the coming months before the Ministerial Conference to prepare the ground for our Ministers to take the important decisions expected of them and to enable them to have that important high-level political discussions that can guide our work post MC13. We would also advise that New Zealand has now completed its Parliamentary examination of the Fisheries Subsidies Agreement and we expect that we will be able to deposit our instrument of ratification before the end of next month.

4.58. The representative of Egypt delivered the following statement:

4.59. We associate ourselves with the statements made by the African Group and the Arab Group. As we approach MC13 and the upcoming October Senior Officials Meeting, Egypt reaffirms the urgency to address the unfulfilled WTO development mandates. Our focus must be on achieving outcomes that align with our development goals. Egypt emphasizes the need for reform that addresses the systemic causes of food insecurity. These reforms should foster resilience against future food crises and shocks. Egypt participates constructively in the para 8 dedicated work programme discussions. Yesterday marked the initiation of our substantive discussions on crafting a comprehensive food security package to present to our esteemed ministers for adoption. In these discussions, we advocate for a resolute demonstration of political will, ensuring that the outcome on food security stands independent. It is imperative that we avoid linking the outcome on food security solely to the agricultural negotiations; as such a linkage could jeopardize our ability to make substantial contributions or, worse yet, render our efforts negligible. Agriculture is a priority to us. The African Group submitted a proposal addressing Domestic support reduction and the parameters of a special safeguard mechanism. This proposal should form the basis of our discussions as it levels the playing field by targeting heavy subsidizers, hence correcting current market failures. It also takes food security and livelihood concerns into account. Egypt stands firm in its call for the extension of the TRIPS MC12 Decision to cover therapeutics and diagnostics. We urge the commencement of text-based negotiations on this matter without delay. The full realization of the Fisheries subsidies

negotiations is of utmost importance to Egypt. Our focus is on disciplines on subsidies contributing to OCOF. Large subsidizers are basically the segment we should target the most, especially those who fish beyond their national Jurisdictions with negative implications on EEZ stocks of developing coastal states. Effective S&DT should be present to sustain our livelihood and food security concerns especially of artisanal and small scall fisheries. The positive developments in the CTD SS on agreement-specific proposals by the G90 are encouraging. Egypt hopes for a similar spirit of engagement on the remaining 8 ASPs. WTO Reform is critical for Egypt, particularly in terms of its development dimension. In context of this reform process, we would call for focused negotiations to provide policy space to support the structural transformation of our economies. Reform should be effective, and development should be measurable. Restoring the two-tier dispute settlement system and ensuring equitable participation remain priorities for Egypt. We advocate for a clear formal multilateral process to achieve these objectives. Egypt expresses grave concern about the rise in unilateral trade-related environmental measures, which disproportionately impact developing countries. We call for multilateral action to ensure coherence between the WTO and relevant environmental agreements. In the domain of e-commerce, Egypt emphasizes the importance of addressing the development dimension in the Work Programme in accordance with the mandate set out in [WT/L/274](#). Our priorities for the October Senior Officials Meeting are centered on the following key areas: food security, addressing trade-related environmental measures and their implication on market access opportunities for developing members, agricultural trade reform, reforming the DSB, and WTO Reform. We support the governing principle the road map that you explained in this regard. Additionally, we urge the adoption of overdue outcomes concerning the extension of the TRIPS MC12 Decision to cover therapeutics and diagnostics and a comprehensive resolution on LDC graduation at the SOM meeting in October. Egypt pledges its full support to ensure a productive and successful meeting of Senior Officials in October and a fruitful MC13 in February 2024.

4.60. The representative of [Norway](#) delivered the following statement:

4.61. As others, we see that the Senior Officials meeting will be extremely important for guiding us towards MC13 and we share many of the thoughts that you outlined in your intervention or presentation this morning. Efforts have to be channelled both to decide themes for what we would call a deliberative policy discussion, such as on trade and climate, industrial policy, and inclusiveness. All of those themes have been mentioned, and we have to decide on which themes would be possible for decision-making at MC13. Regardless of the format, however, there are two themes we want to highlight for the agenda, namely fisheries subsidies and dispute settlement. For fisheries subsidies, hopefully after the two first negotiating weeks of the fall, we should have the outline of convergence and a draft text. Some very specific questions will have to be posed as also New Zealand alluded to. The answers to which will guide us towards an agreement that should pass the red-phased text, or whatever you may call it, while noting that no one is going to get the perfect outcome seen from their side. Our Senior Officials should also encourage further work on ratification so that we at MC13 can celebrate entry into force of the FSA. For dispute settlement, discussing the status quo of where the informal process has led us and on what themes we need to direct our efforts and how will be important. Nearly all Members want a result by MC13. We keep hearing that. A high-level Senior Officials meeting should not lose time on the nitty gritty of institutional WTO reform and I agree with those who suggested having a report at the meeting. Most of the issues should be solved by us, by experts in Geneva, but a topic for Senior Officials could be, and I have not heard it mentioned today, on how we welcome stakeholder engagement at the WTO. Another issue which has been mentioned is how the consensus principle should or should not be used. As we see it, it should not impede Members from having either discussions, negotiations or results. Costa Rica and Barbados pointed out the issues that we have in front of us on the Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement. Development is a core theme throughout most of what we do at the WTO, but even more specifically the meeting can be used to finalize again something others have said, the decision on LDC Graduation Annex 1 in the LDC revised proposal, if not finalised at next week's General Council. Finally, you have also asked on the procedural issues for the SOM and if we have parallel discussions on a number of themes, we do agree with you that it would be useful to use one facilitator per theme to get everything together so that we actually can have reports that point us in certain directions.

4.62. The representative of [Japan](#) delivered the following statement:

4.63. The main objective of the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) in October is for capitals to take stock of the situation and share a realistic outlook on the outcomes of the main agendas of MC13 as well as necessary subsequent work to accomplish them. It would then be useful to hold another SOM just before MC13 to make final preparations for Ministers to agree on the outcomes. Summarizing

the discussions among Members so far, the candidates for the main agendas for MC13 are: (i) WTO Reform (DS Reform), (ii) agriculture and food security, (iii) fisheries, (iv) the Work Programme on E-Commerce and the moratorium, (v) development and inclusivity, (vi) new critical issues for deliberation such as state intervention and industrial policy, and trade and environment including climate. In the SOM in October, we consider it important to take account of these themes, leading to the setting of expectations for MC13. While DS reform is the top priority in this house, an informal process is currently underway and the discussion among Senior Officials needs to be based on the progress of discussions in light of what the WTO can accomplish at MC13 and within 2024. The functional improvements of each subsidiary body should be carried out on a "reform by doing" basis under the GC Chair while the SOM could take up items of genuine needs to be discussed at that level. The Work Programme on E-Commerce and the moratorium: Japan considers it appropriate that the SOM will take stock of the ongoing discussions in the dedicated session, looking at the outcome of the ministerial decision at MC13. Active discussions are taking place under the CoA SS Chair. Japan has continuously insisted on the importance of food security in the context of agricultural negotiations, and we would like to discuss what the WTO can deliver in this regard at MC13 in the SOM. With regard to the second wave of negotiations, it is not easy to foresee its progress as of October at this point, but we consider it appropriate to assess the prospects for its conclusion at MC13 in order to accelerate negotiations. The impact on trade of State Intervention and Industrial Policy, Japan suggests that, after deepening common understanding at the September retreat meeting, in-depth discussions should be held among us in Geneva to distil the items where Members' positions converge in order to agree on the establishment of an appropriate venue for discussion at MC13. On trade and environment, based on the discussions taking place in the CTE, Japan suggests that Members exchange views in the SOM on items to be agreed at MC13 with a view to advancing discussions on these items toward MC14. Development aspect is also important as a cross-cutting issue and it is an agenda that we should discuss in the SOM to assess the state of play. LDC graduation should also be settled in the process to MC13.

4.64. The representative of South Africa delivered the following statement:

4.65. The credibility of the WTO and MC13 will rest on the ability to deliver meaningful development outcomes. On the MC12 TRIPS Decision, it is highly regrettable that a few delegations have thus far prevented the Membership from reaching a Decision on the extension as mandated by Ministers and the decision is key to the credibility of the WTO. The delay in reaching this decision highlights the need for a trigger-ready mechanisms to obviate the need to negotiate waivers in the event of future pandemics. On Agriculture, MC13 must deliver a comprehensive food security and livelihoods package that addresses the most trade distorting support, a permanent solution on PSH and SSM, as well as an outcome on cotton. We have proposals, on the table including by the Africa Group that can serve as a good basis for text-based negotiations. Effective S&D, including the preservation of policy space to safeguard the livelihoods of low-income and resource-poor farmers is important. The agriculture package at MC13 must not only address immediate food security challenges, but also deliver outcomes that build resilience in agriculture production, correct the systemic imbalances in the AoA and level the playing field. In relation to WTO Reform, development must be at its centre. We therefore expect MC13 to deliver tangible outcomes on the proposals that have been tabled by the African Group on policy space for industrialisation. This requires rebalancing of trade rules to avail policy tools that will place developing countries on a sustainable growth trajectory. WTO Reform must also ensure a fully and well-functioning two-tier dispute settlement mechanism accessible to all Members by 2024. As discussions advance towards the drafting phase, the process will need to be multilateralised under the DSB with a clear roadmap. We are concerned with calls for an early harvest, especially if it does not address our issues. Any outcome must be balanced and take into account the interests of all. Regarding Fisheries, we commend Chair for an open and transparent process to date. We reiterate our calls for a balanced text that delivers on the SDG mandate and on effective and appropriate S&D. S&D cannot and must not be regarded as being at odds with sustainability. The disciplines in the OCOF pillar must ensure that major subsidisers engaged in large scale industrial fishing take the biggest responsibility. The ACP proposal reflects our position and hence our decision to cosponsor it. We also welcome the LDC proposal. A development package must also deliver outcomes on the long outstanding 10 G90 ASPs which have already been significantly reduced from over 150. We welcome the process initiated by the Chair of the CTD SS. We once more call for the urgent conclusion of an agreement on LDC graduation. It is our firm belief that a meaningful and substantive outcome is achievable even before MC13. Upcoming Senior Trade Officials Meeting and Process towards MC13: In relation to the Senior Trade Officials we believe this to be a stock taking meeting towards MC13 but also an opportunity to make decisions on some longstanding issues such as LDC graduation and extension of TRIPS decision to therapeutics and

diagnostics if not done by then, and also provide guidance, particularly on the following issues we consider a priority: (i) WTO Reform – policy space for industrialization, (ii) agricultural trade reform, PSH, SSM and cotton with a view towards a food security and livelihoods package, and (iii) trade and environment - we cannot afford to ignore the concerns of governments and the private sector on the rising proliferation of unilateral trade-related environmental measures. Overall, it would be important that we avoid prematurely prejudging outcomes that are or not feasible at MC13. We should just get on with it, and allow the negotiating processes to, at the right time, determine what an emerging package could look like. Any process towards the Senior Trade Officials Meeting and MC13 must be open, transparent and inclusive.

4.66. The representative of the Republic of Korea delivered the following statement:

4.67. Following the convening notice, I will focus on what could be addressed at the Senior Officials' Meeting in October and how we should best channel our efforts after the summer break. At SOM as well as MC13, Korea's top priority is WTO Reform. WTO Reform should cover all functions of the WTO, as our Ministers reaffirmed in the MC12 outcome document, which includes the dispute settlement, monitoring and deliberative, and the rule-making function. First, on dispute settlement reform, we are making steady progress in the informal discussions and ready to start drafting after the summer break. We should also strive to reach agreement on important topics and should stocktake what has been achieved by then at the SOM, for further political thrust to agree on a package by the end of this year to fulfil our objective of ensuring a fully and well-functioning dispute settlement system by 2024. On the monitoring and deliberative function, the retreat last June served as a good opportunity for Members to have candid discussions. Korea supports the bottom-up approach on "Reform-by-doing" and looks forward to in-depth discussions in the relevant bodies during the fall. In doing so, Korea expects that the Secretariat could develop and update further progress on the table of measures in JOB/GC/345 and the state of play of WTO bodies in its addendum, to be reported to Senior Officials in October and, consequently, to Ministers at MC13. Korea also regards development as an integral part of WTO Reform and appreciates the various proposals put forward by the African Group and others. We should have a clear fact-based diagnosis before moving on to prescriptions, and we would benefit from having more clarity on the priorities between various submissions and how they relate to one another. We should also make substantial headway rather than "holding and delaying" deliverables until MC13. For example, Korea is willing to discuss early adoption of LDC graduation on Annex I before or at the October SOM. In addition to WTO Reform, I would like to shortly comment on E-commerce moratorium, Fisheries Subsidies and Agriculture. Regarding the Moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions, the two dedicated discussions and the workshop with IGOs were useful in deepening our understanding of this issue, including its scope and definition. Korea believes that the E-Commerce moratorium is one of the important topics that should be addressed in the upcoming Senior Officials Meetings. Regarding Fisheries Subsidies, we are fully back in negotiation mode and hope that new proposals can be circulated before summer break. As we begin text-based discussions at the September fish week, we can take advantage of the SOM to stocktake and reach further convergence. To expedite the progress, it would be crucial for us to recognize the core elements that have been widely supported and preserve them in the new text. On Agriculture, strengthening global food security is now the most important element in negotiations for MC13. To contribute to these discussions, Korea hosted the 'High Yield Grain Seed Development and Green Revolution' Workshop yesterday, to show that the revitalization of Green Revolution could be the most efficient and meaningful way to solve the persisting food shortage problem in LDCs and NFIDCs. We hope to further discuss this issue and that this aspect could be adequately reflected in the MC13 outcome on food security. Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to touch upon the recently achieved milestone in Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) negotiations. It is an important contribution to development, in relation to the rule-making function. This agreement will serve as a global benchmark for investment facilitation and developing countries and LDCs stand to benefit most from "better and more investment" flows. We hope this will help us keep relevance of the multilateral trading system.

4.68. The representative of Canada delivered the following statement:

4.69. In our view, a successful Senior Officials Meeting would be one that sets up MC13 so our ministers can truly engage on priority issues such as industrial policy and trade and climate change and so that ministers provide direction for our future work. On substance, we also need to use this meeting to decide together what outcomes are realistic, to build convergence, and to start to take the measure of difficult issues. It is essential that this meeting, and its most crucial discussions, be conducted in an open, transparent, and inclusive manner. We heard loud and clear at June's retreat

that we must abandon the model of having discussions or making decisions that leave the majority of members in the dark. It's true that my ambitions for this fall are high. But they are high because I think there is a lot of good work we can do in Geneva, both in the lead up to the Senior Officials Meeting and MC13. There is clear convergence around which issues we wish to see addressed at MC13. We now need to get to work on figuring out the process. Canada is a firm believer in the power of informal discussions between diverse groups of Members. We saw how useful June's retreat was in terms of stimulating free-flowing and frank discussions. Let's capitalize on the momentum it has opened up and start organizing our own conversations with members who are not our usual interlocutors. Yesterday, I hosted just such a discussion, here at the WTO. It was both productive and rewarding. We heard Members' views on both substance and process, at the SOM, in the lead-up to MC13, and beyond to MC14. There was agreement on some issues, and candid but cordial discussion on more challenging areas. I would unreservedly encourage all of you to organize your own discussions like this. My team and I would be happy to share experiences and offer assistance in setting something up. Canada strongly condemns the decision of the Russian Federation to withdraw its participation in the Black Sea Grain Initiative. This is a grave escalation of the weaponization of hunger by the Russian Federation. The decision of the Russian Federation will lead to an increase of global food prices, impacting first and foremost emerging economies dependent on food imports. Canada commends the efforts of Türkiye to facilitate negotiations with Russia in good faith. The Russian Federation continues to claim that their agricultural exports are impeded while exporting a record amount of grains this season. Canada calls on the Russian Federation to immediately renew its participation in the agreement to avoid any further shocks to global food systems already strained by its war of aggression against Ukraine.

4.70. The representative of Chile delivered the following statement:

4.71. We much agree that the Senior Officials' Meeting is an opportunity that should be utilized as much as possible, and we share the view that that this should be done by addressing both operational topics and moving forward on substantive conclusions. As mentioned by the Director-General, the aim of all this is to have political signposts on the road to delivering outcomes at MC13. The format used for the meeting will be essential, especially the questions that will guide the various sessions, and the way in which we take stock of the conversations held. As potential priority topics, we would highlight:

- a. the second wave of the fisheries subsidies negotiations,
- b. the impasse affecting the Appellate Body (at senior official level, it will be important to listen and gather impressions regarding this situation and ways to proceed),
- c. negotiations on agriculture: how to achieve concrete progress on a framework for food security, involving reductions in trade-distorting domestic support, and taking into account a joint and balanced approach with other pillars, such as PSH.
- d. exploring ways to invigorate discussions on trade and the environment and trade and inclusiveness. This has a two-fold objective: (i) to identify areas where the WTO can contribute; and (ii) to address global challenges from a collaborative and multilateral perspective.
- e. deliberative and monitoring function (with elements such as the functioning of Ministerial Conferences, the work of councils and committees, transparency, promoting stakeholder participation, and the use of factual and scientific information). On that point, deliberative function, together with the moratorium on electronic transactions, we believe that an "early harvest" can be achieved before MC13.

4.72. The representative of Chile, speaking as Coordinator of the Structured Discussions on Investment Facilitation for Development, delivered the following statement:

4.73. I take this opportunity to update Members on the latest developments in the Joint Initiative on Investment Facilitation for Development. At the high-level plenary meeting held in the afternoon of 6 July, after over five and a half years of preparatory work and intense text-based negotiations, the over 110 WTO Members participating in the initiative announced the conclusion of the negotiations on the text of the IFD Agreement. As highlighted by many of you present for this

landmark occasion, this represents a momentous achievement. However, this clearly is not the end but rather the beginning of the journey – a journey that will entail engagement with the wider WTO Membership. As laid out in the statement by the co-coordinators issued on 6 July, next semester, work will proceed along the following four complimentary tracks. First, advance discussion on legal incorporation of the IFD Agreement into the WTO legal architecture, further analysing all procedure aspects in full respect to the WTO Agreement. Second, IFD participants will increase their outreach efforts towards all WTO Members including non-participating Members. They will not only highlight the benefits of joining the IFD Agreement and the extensive technical assistance and capacity building support available under it. Ambassador Park and I are always available for any Member or group of Members who would like further information on the IFD Agreement and what it can bring to your country. Third, IFD participants will intensify their support to the investment facilitation needs assessment process for developing and LDC Members. A survey to assess the demands for needs assessment among participating developing and LDC Members was launched a couple of months ago. I encourage you to complete it before the deadline on 28 July. So far, 20 Members have finalized their interest to conduct an investment facilitation needs assessment with 18 of them requesting technical assistance to do so. Any delegation who would like to flag its interest to conduct a needs assessment including non-participants in the initiative is more than welcome to reach out to me or Ambassador Park. Finally, IFD participants will complete the final refinements to the IFD Agreement next semester – namely, the textual adjustments that will emanate from the discussions on legal incorporation, the legal review of the text and ensuring the language consistency across the three language versions of the agreement. As I said, and in line with the IFD initiative's open, transparent and inclusive nature, Ambassador Park and I stand ready to engage with all WTO Members on any issue they may wish to discuss.

4.74. The representative of Argentina delivered the following statement:

4.75. We would like to underscore that we believe that the Senior Officials Meeting should serve as a consensus building meeting for MC13. That meeting will undoubtedly be guided by the ongoing reform process, which must out of necessity include the actual implementation of the pending negotiating mandates, which were painstakingly negotiated over many years, reflecting a balance that was achieved through those negotiations and most of which include issues of vital importance for the development of many of Members. Agriculture is the greatest outstanding issue. Reforming agricultural trade rules must be the central part of the WTO's response to the food security problems facing many countries, including through the elimination of distorting subsidies and disguised restrictions on trade. Let us not forget that many of these agricultural subsidies, sometimes amounting to billions of dollars, are trade distorting and often harmful to the environment. Following this premise, we hope that Members will continue to work hard to reach agreements in the second wave of negotiations on fisheries subsidies, in order to achieve disciplines that complement the Agreement, such as those that ban subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, which not only distort markets, but also have a negative impact on the sustainability of the oceans. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted inequalities in access to vaccines, diagnostics and treatments, with availability initially limited to a small number of Members. In this regard, we must agree without further delay to extend the Decision of the TRIPS Agreement of June this year to diagnostics and therapeutics, in accordance with the paragraph 8 mandate. WTO Reform should have at its foundation an improvement in all the functions of the Organization, to facilitate the development of Members, with special attention given to the needs of developing countries. In this regard:

- a. We believe it is essential to overcome the deadlock situation with the Appellate Body, which not only undermines the WTO's dispute settlement system, but also adversely affects the WTO's negotiating and deliberative functions.
- b. All Members, particularly developing Members, are facing major challenges in their efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. We agree on the importance of the environmental protection objective and the fight against climate change, although this does not imply endorsing unilateral measures that unnecessarily restrict trade. These topics should be addressed as part of the WTO's mandate. We must also avoid bringing to this negotiating table a new mandate on industrial subsidies related to the environment as a means to move forward in the negotiations on the long delayed agricultural reform, with a current mandate that has already been in force for more than a quarter of a century without substantive progress.

- c. On transparency issues, we are willing to discuss this point, but above all, we value compliance with existing WTO rules and agreements. We must also stress the incompatibility of many unilateral measures with WTO rules and principles, which have been increasingly imposed in recent times.
- d. Lastly, we are analysing the submissions on policy spaces, technology transfer and scope for industrial development. We thank the African Group and look forward to discussing these submissions at the September retreat.

4.76. The representative of China delivered the following statement:

4.77. For MC13, our priority issues should be those that have a clear MC12 mandate and are urgently needed by people, including DS reform, fisheries subsidies, food security, and development. On dispute settlement reform, in spite of various challenges, we are glad to witness that all Members are seriously engaging with each other, conducting frank and solution-orientated discussions and making progress on certain issues. Given the limited timeframe, we urge Members to continue to work hard and focus on remaining core issues with a pragmatic spirit so that we could move to the text drafting stage after the summer break and finish text-based discussions by the end of 2023. On fisheries subsidies, with a deepened understanding among Members through the well-organized fish weeks, we are looking forward to receiving the new Chairs' text and having text-based negotiations starting from September. To achieve this goal, we believe a Chair's text adhering to the mandate and establishing fair and balanced discipline is of vital importance. More specifically, special ability criteria should be the core principle for the disciplines, in particular, with regard to the subsidies for the fish activities beyond Member's jurisdiction. On food security, in order to reach realistic and substantial outcomes in the next few months, Members should be encouraged to contribute with specific ideas and proposals. We hope a forward-looking discussion could be started as early as possible. At the same time, discussions in COA SS Working Group on Food Security could also be taken into account. On development, we are expecting the proposal on Graduated LDCs' smooth transition to be an early harvest. On the G90 proposal, if we are unable to reach consensus on all ten deliverables, at least we should harvest some of them. On e-commerce, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Dwarka-Canabady for her efforts in facilitating the e-commerce dedicated discussions. We believe this will help us learn more from each other and find common ground and deliver a positive outcome at MC13, including extending the moratorium. Considering the limited time before MC13, we must make full use of the October SOM. For efficient discussions, we agree with the ideas that the Director-General shared this morning on organizational principles. We suggest that the first session is a plenary session for Negotiating Chairs and Facilitators to make reports to Senior Officials indicating the progress made and that remaining issues needed to be addressed, perhaps Senior Officials can gather the Geneva panorama together with the documents presented to them before the meeting. Then, Senior Officials can break into several groups and give the views and guidance through interactive discussions based on what they have heard in the first session. After that, another planning session can be held to allow Group Coordinators and the Chair to make reports. Third – deliberative session. At this moment, we agree that this could be left to Ambassadors in Geneva to make some more focus on issues that need their engagement. Bilateral conversation is important but we also see the value of Room D format on having reached consensus so we suggest that based on the discussion, the Director-General, together with the GC Chair can organize Green Room or Room D format meetings with a view to letting Senior Officials reach consensus on the list of MC13 outcomes and give clear instructions on those difficult or critical issues. It is expected after Senior Officials, in principle, no further new issues should be tabled. In order to have a meaningful and fruitful October Senior Officials, good organization is essential. In the meantime, we also need a good basis of the discussion. Therefore, as we are one week away from summer break and only have a month in the fall to prepare for Senior Officials, we hope Members could ramp up their efforts to achieve as much progress as possible by the October SOM. At the same time, China is discussing a TBT document with others to use the WTO as a path for response to the new challenges such as digital economy and climate change. We also submitted a supply chain proposal to the July General Council. We are looking forward to Members' support, opinions and suggestions on these matters.

4.78. The representative of Thailand delivered the following statement:

4.79. At this stage, we will not comment in detail on what we foresee in MC13 but would like to focus on the questions related to the Senior Officials' meeting (SOM). I think, for us in ASEAN, we are used to having the SOM meetings. So, at least for the Thailand delegation, we see the SOM as

not only the technical top person to discuss and negotiate things, but also a political engagement. Given the number of members at the WTO, I do not think that long drawn negotiations should be foreseen at the SOM meeting. So, in our view, the SOM meeting that will take place in October should focus on the state of play in the WTO and also provide political guidance if at that stage in October we could agree or need some advice. Also, I think it is important for the senior officials to understand what is going on at the WTO and take back what they see as a signal to the ministers to prepare for the ministerial meeting in early 2024. So, having said that, I think that not only the SOM meeting should see the state of play, they should have an understanding of the stocktaking and also help us prepare for the groundwork for the MC13. Regarding the areas that we see as priorities in MC13, I think when we have the SOM here, they should not go home empty handed. They must be here and able to gavel and achieve something otherwise it is no use to have another SOM and they would not be interested. So, I would think that there are some issues that are low hanging fruits or early harvest. Good candidates are the LDCs graduation, TRIPS and E-Commerce moratorium that we can have some agreements in October. So, we have some issues SOM can agree and also other issues that SOM can understand that there would be political guidance or decision needed from ministers at MC13 and that would be the WTO of the future because I don't want SOMs to acknowledge that WTO is preoccupied with the existing issues. We have to give them the impression that we are moving forward. But, of course, we have to discuss agriculture and fisheries at the SOM. These are the two issues, but I am not going to go into detail regarding Thailand's position in these areas. Last but not least, for WTO of the future, we call them WTO Reform which includes dispute settlement. But I think even though some suggest to leave the deliberative issues for the Minister to decide. However, it is important for the SOM to understand that what the minister may have to face up at MC13. So, I would like to propose that we should have a session for the SOM to familiarize themselves with the upcoming new issues of the WTO trade such as trade and climate change, industrial development, digital economy and even some of the issues that are being discussed in the JSIs. So, those are our ideas at this stage.

4.80. The representative of the United Kingdom delivered the following statement:

4.81. I will start with where we want to finish and think where we want to be in Abu Dhabi next February/early March. We know about some of the issues, not only within the organization, but also outside which will impact our Ministers' views and their expectations as they come to Abu Dhabi. We know, that sadly, we are going to be in a crisis of food insecurity, which has, to be honest, been worsened this week by Russia's withdrawal from the Black Sea Grain Initiative and the subsequent threats to civilian shipping in and around Ukraine. We know that we are going to be in an environmental crisis, probably the hottest year on record. We will be meeting in Abu Dhabi on the back of COP28. We know that we are going to be meeting at a time of economic uncertainty for so many of the Members of this organization. So, we need to think about the expectations of our Ministers. And we work our way back from Abu Dhabi in a way that is purposeful and thank you for setting out so clearly your sense of the process going forward. The most important thing for us to avoid doing over the coming weeks and months leading up to the Senior Officials Meeting is discussing what our officials should discuss. Rather than actually doing the hard work, of negotiating with our partners to actually achieve the substantive negotiations that our Ministers and senior officials, and most of all, our businesses and consumers, our workers are expecting us to be doing. There will be a couple of things for us to celebrate in Abu Dhabi. That's a good thing. We know that we will be able to celebrate what we have achieved in the last couple of weeks on the Investment Facilitation for Development. But we have hard work to do over the Autumn with colleagues. We know we all hope to achieve something on Dispute Settlement. It is hard for our Ministers to come to Abu Dhabi and walk away without agreeing something on Dispute Settlement. We would have a hard job, all of us, explaining to our Ministers, our public and our media, if we were not able to achieve something. I was struck by the comments by the African Group, presented by Cameroon, to agree something on food security which is actually meaningful. That might actually make a difference to increasing food security. We have tried to make a modest contribution to that on export restrictions which we think is part of the policy mix; others have other suggestions. I think it is really good that our distinguished Chair of CoA SS is now equipped with so many proposals on the table that we can really look at in detail. We need to come away from Abu Dhabi with real progress on fisheries. First of all, we have to ratify the agreement and provide support for the implementation. We are certainly on the case, if not quite as swiftly as some of us might wish. Let me pay tribute to the Chair of the fisheries negotiations as to the way in which they are being dealt with. As he kindly said, we have put down a proposal today that tries to capture some of the really useful ideas that a whole number of delegations have made in those fish weeks. But of course, there is some hard work to be done in the Autumn in those fisheries negotiations. E-commerce is really important for a

number of reasons. A number of us were at the JAG (the advisory group of the ITC) and I was struck by how vital digital trade is to the work they do to enable MSMEs in the developing world to reap the benefits of global trade. I do think that it is incumbent upon us to ensure that we are enabling digital trade, not disabling it. It plays a really important role. Similarly, an agreement on LDC graduation is important and we need to do the hard work on that over the coming weeks to get a deal on that. Similarly, we need to sort the long-term future of the Enhanced Integrated Framework. My delegation is on the case with recipients and donors. Those are all decisions, one way or another that we need to take by Abu Dhabi. But we also know we need to set an agenda for ourselves for the years ahead. We have a lot of work where we should have made more progress. There are a number of issues where we need to be doing more, where they are not sufficiently on our agenda. We need to be thinking ahead for an organization in the 2020s and looking ahead to 2030s. That agenda that you have set out DG; as trade being green and inclusive, services that are digital. We need to equip ourselves for that. We need to ensure that gets done. So, there is a lot of work to do. We need real clarity on how are going to do that. We need to come back from our summer holidays in September, and as others have said, there is not much time. Not a lot of meetings, either formal meetings, or GC or Senior Official Meeting. So, less discussion about discussion and more negotiation about how we can bring ourselves closer to substantive agreements, in what we hope, will be a successful MC13 in Abu Dhabi.

4.82. The representative of Mauritius delivered the following statement:

4.83. We associate ourselves with the statements made by Cameroon on behalf of the African Group and Kenya on behalf of the ACP Group. On fisheries subsidies, we would like to commend the NGR Chair for the transparent and inclusive manner in which he has been driving the process, trying to foster understanding and building momentum. A lot has been said last week in the fisheries week so that we are focused simply on what we expect from MC13: (i) an adequate response to the negotiating mandate aimed at disciplining subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing; (ii) an effective and appropriate special and differential treatment; and (iii) to carve a fair deal that responds to the concerns of large fishing nations and small fishing nations in a proportionate manner with the aim of restoring balance in our seas for sustainable trade. I will not dwell on agriculture, except to say that the common expectation should be to move away from the stalemate and at the very least to address food security concerns that COVID, climate change and international conflicts have brought to the fore. This issue is especially a hard one for NFIDCs who expect to find some answers. On reform, we are pleased to note the high number of written submissions which reflects Members' engagement. Reform from our perspective *inter alia* means S&DT and policy space to run hand in hand with disciplines being negotiated. Not all Members are at the same level of development and we need to provide them with necessary flexibilities to allow them to smoothly integrate into the global value chain and benefit from international trade. Reform should therefore address the development needs of WTO Members especially small, developing ones. We have noted substantial progress on changes being proposed and implemented for the effective and efficient running of a number of committees and we welcome this. Turning to DS Reform, while we understand that substantive work is being undertaken on DS reform through the informal facilitator-led process, we wish to emphasize the need to formalize this process to make it more inclusive and transparent, especially by scheduling meetings that do not clash with other major committees and provide adequate time between successive meetings. The dispute settlement system has always been the core of the WTO and it is what gives credibility to the rules and disciplines we establish and trust in the multilateral trading system. So, we look to the bigger traders and regular users of the DS system to lead the way on this one. Turning to the October SOM, we agree with your proposals: (i) stocktaking, factual report to be prepared by the Secretariat and the updates from the Chairs, (ii) the early harvest, wherever possible – surely the Senior Officials can give themselves a pat on the back for having delivered on LDC Graduation, and (iii) the identification of specific issues that Senior Officials can solve and give a push to. The EU proposal to focus on dispute settlement, agriculture and fisheries makes sense because we cannot do everything, and we need to get the Senior Officials to take time to reflect on things. But another issue on which we could also engage them is on the way we intend to conduct MC13 – the process. We need to look at this because we would like the process to remain as inclusive and transparent as possible and we need to know what is going to happen, how our Ministers are going to be engaged, and what they are expected to do. As the EU said, we need to prepare this space of identification of issues carefully, if we are to handle this successfully. However, we seem to have developed a culture in the house whereby no one will even hint about the possibility of a compromise until the very last moment, including stopping the clock, if need be, to reach there. I find this a pity because movement forward on any one of the three issues we could identify could lead to momentum on the other issues on the understanding

that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. I do not know how to address this, but I am certainly willing to engage with any thinking that goes on regarding this issue and whether we need to go through a similitude of discussion with the Senior Officials knowing fully well that we would not do anything until February or whether we can actually engage them to see how far we can push this.

4.84. The representative of Uruguay delivered the following statement:

4.85. Uruguay recognizes and supports the efforts of Ambassador Alparslan Acarsoy in finding a way forward in the agriculture negotiations, which is the WTO's greatest outstanding topic. We reaffirm our absolute commitment to continue working constructively with all Members to achieve positive outcomes at MC13. Members must fulfil outstanding mandates, in particular the original mandate that we set for ourselves in 1995 in Article 20 of the Agreement on Agriculture, which instructs us to make substantial progressive reductions in support and protection resulting in fundamental reform. The direction of the reform process is clear and does not allow for different interpretations. Issues such as experience to date from implementing the reduction commitments, non-trade concerns, and special and differential treatment are elements to be taken into account as we move toward an outcome, and they cannot be used as an argument to change the direction of the reform process as agreed by all. We hope that Members will show the necessary political will to make decisive steps on this long overdue mandate, with the firm belief that this will mark a fundamental contribution by the WTO to our common development, food security and environmental protection goals that will benefit everyone, in particular developing and least developed countries. We know from recent experience where we can end up when we insist on finding definitive solutions to certain issues as a prerequisite for making any progress on reforming the agricultural trade rules to which we all committed ourselves in 1995 – and let me say this, it is not far. We therefore urge all delegations to act constructively to reach convergence in order to ensure we can move forward on all outstanding agriculture areas, while taking into account the interests of all delegations in an effective and balanced way. In this regard, we have a proposal on the table on the domestic support pillar, presented by Costa Rica, which provides for a balanced and feasibility-oriented approach, and is, in our view, an ideal baseline for the post summer recess negotiations. We invite Members to use this platform to engage in a negotiating process to build, jointly and progressively, a comprehensive outcome that effectively addresses the concerns and interests of the different WTO Members, in a manner consistent with the reform mandate. In regard to fisheries subsidies, we congratulate the Chairperson of the Negotiating Group for the way he has led these negotiations and in particular the fourth Fish Week that was held recently. We support the importance of focusing on the elements that are common to all proposals in order to engage in a text-based discussion after the summer recess. We are willing to work on all proposals that meet the objective of designing a stricter discipline, while also having a menu of options that take into account the particularities and situations of developing countries. The time available to us is limited if we are to finalise the text in December. Bridges would therefore need to be built and the right degree of convergence found to secure a positive outcome with which we can all live. We underscore the importance of the Work Programme and moratorium on electronic commerce and support the process and leadership of Ambassador Usha Dwarka-Canabady in conducting dedicated discussions that facilitate an exchange of information and strengthen the levels of confidence among Members, with a view to the adoption of critical definitions over the coming months. Taking into account in particular the principles of non-discrimination and transparency, as well as the objectives of achieving greater levels of certainty and predictability in international trade, Uruguay recognizes that the moratorium has had positive effects and constitutes a cornerstone of the development architecture for electronic commerce and the digital economy. In this regard, we believe it is important to clearly state our support for the renewal of the moratorium on the imposition of customs duties on electronic transmissions at the next Ministerial Conference. Regarding the dispute settlement system, we would like to reiterate our concern about the disappearance of the Appellate Body and the systemic consequences that this has brought, as reflected in the number of cases appealed into the void. Uruguay views the dispute settlement system as a two-stage system, with a second, specialist and comprehensive instance of review, as provided for in the WTO Agreements. Having said that, we would like to express a certain degree of optimism and expectation for the discussions that are taking place as part of the informal process to reform the dispute settlement system coordinated by Mr Marco Molina. In this regard, we would like to recognize the integrity, honesty and commitment of both the coordinator and Members in the discussions. Lastly, we would like to reaffirm our delegation's commitment and flexibility in this process and express our expectation that Members will be able to reach a compromise to overcome this impasse. In conclusion, in order to best prepare for October's Senior Officials' Meeting,

and to ensure that it is as productive as possible, we believe it is essential to learn more about the topic that will be addressed at that meeting, as well as expectations regarding these issues.

4.86. The representative of Paraguay delivered the following statement:

4.87. We thank the CoA SS Chair for the update and his efforts to try to mobilize Members toward negotiations on a base text. However, we cannot help but note, as we did in this week's CoA SS meetings, that it is an incomplete menu and does not provide adequate options for non-stockpile proponents, missing basic elements such as the need for capping, which is a key provision and not just an issue that can be "negotiated later". As we have also stated, we are ready to help with concrete suggestions to complete the menu and support you in Members efforts. Agriculture is undoubtedly the most neglected issue at the WTO and consequently the most distorted sector in international trade. Concluding negotiations to reduce progressively and substantially the levels of agricultural trade distortion and protection mandated by Article 20 of the Agreement on Agriculture is an obligation of international law that all Members must abide by. This mandate has been neglected for so long that it is sometimes presented as something from the past that has no real application in the context of today's crisis, yet it is as relevant as ever and even more urgent to address if we want a real WTO response to today's challenges. Reform under Article 20 of the Agreement on Agriculture is the best way for the WTO to contribute to ensuring global food security, in particular for developing countries, and environmental sustainability in agriculture. Food security and reform are indivisible issues at our organization. Progress should be made to deliver concrete and tangible results across the three pillars of the Agreement on Agriculture. For MC13, reform of the domestic support pillar must be tackled, covering all product specific support and concentration of subsidies, including those for public stockholding for food security purposes at administered prices, in a holistic, balanced, fair and market-oriented manner. At the same time, work must be done to improve market access conditions for agricultural products, which not only includes the market access pillar of the reform, but also the strengthening of the implementation of other WTO agreements in order to avoid unjustified non-tariff barriers. Electronic commerce: Separately, my delegation believes that we should work together to advance technical discussions on the extension of the electronic commerce moratorium and revitalization of the 1998 Work Programme on Electronic Commerce. Paraguay believes that the digital economy can be transformed into a vehicle for development and in this sense has historically supported the extension of the moratorium. This is notwithstanding the discussion of the scope and impact of the moratorium and a better understanding of how to use internal taxes applied to digital services as an alternative to increase tax revenue, in line with the National Development Plan 2030 and the SDGs. For the same reason, Paraguay is actively participating in the Joint Initiative on E-commerce and is even facilitating a negotiating group. But as we pointed out at the Heads of Delegation meeting held on 6 July, we believe that if we want to achieve an inclusive outcome that has an impact on the economy of all Members, the Director General and the co convenors should engage Ministers and senior officials in the discussion as soon as possible. Regarding the best way to channel efforts in preparation for the Senior Officials Meeting, we believe that it would be best to have a limited agenda focused on the most relevant issues, on the issues that need the political momentum to ensure we approach MC13 with the prospect of concrete results. In this regard, as we have already mentioned, the agricultural question in all aspects should not be excluded. Likewise, issues such as reform, from a development perspective, where special and differential treatment for developing countries, and even more so for landlocked countries, is addressed. The full implementation of the Dispute Settlement Body is essential in order to continue building trust that the agreements will not become dead letters. I could not fail to mention the work we have been doing in the different groups on "reforming by doing", as this gives even more momentum to the task of seeing and making the WTO more active and up to date. Lastly, the decision to extend the vaccine waiver to therapeutics and diagnostics is a decision that should not be delayed any longer; it is a commitment to our society. In our country, in less than a month a new government will take office, with renewed hopes to continue providing greater welfare to our people. Two months into the new government, a high-level authority will be able to come to Geneva if the conditions are right to achieve the progress and political momentum we need, and we will only achieve this if we show a little flexibility in addressing each other's red lines and striking a balance in the interests of all parties.

4.88. The representative of the Philippines delivered the following statement:

4.89. We agree with your guidance on the going forward steps towards both the SOM and MC13. The value of the SOM is the opportunity for dialogue and gathering of these high officials for a frank exchange of ideas, building camaraderie, evolving the resulting buy in to our shared goals of

development and prosperity through open markets and a rules-based system. On the Fisheries Subsidies Agreement (FSA), the recent exchange of proposals and positions on the key disciplines provide us with more clarity on workable options to start text-based negotiations in the fall. The Philippines is encouraged by the leadership shown by large fishing nations in fast-tracking the domestic acceptance of the FSA. SOMs should guide negotiators with a firm timeframe for narrowing options for text-based negotiations and commit to early ratification and entry into force of FSA Part 1. On agriculture, we note the divergent positions that still persist on core issues such as domestic support, PSH and SSM, and deadlocks of ideas on the reform process under Article 20 of the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA). There are new proposals that have been put forward that merit consideration, and we agree that food security must be prioritized, with special care in considering the situation of net food import developing countries. Building on the SDGs, and given the clear impact of climate change, we would stand to benefit from having a shared vision of sustainable, resilient and efficient farming systems and consider what trade policy tools would have the most positive impact for developing countries and LDCs. On development, we support the many interventions to ask the SOM to pave the way for early resolution and delivery of the LDCs Graduation Package. The Philippines welcomes the updates on developments on the Joint Initiatives, and in particular, we appreciate the constructive engagement demonstrated by over 110 delegations in finalizing textual negotiations for the Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) agreement, which provides us with one key deliverable for MC13. The future IFD Agreement, with its enhanced transparency and facilitation procedures will contribute to increased foreign direct investments, particularly in emerging economies. We also note the steady progress that has been achieved in the JSI on e-commerce and welcome efforts to increase the pace of negotiations. Given the progress made in IFD and SDR, the SOM should engage on the question of how plurilateralism fits within the WTO architecture and the concept of responsible multilateralism. On digital trade, Members should provide greater clarity on the scope and definition of electronic transmissions and consider early consensus and compromise on the moratorium extension and work program expansion. We could also seek further convergence on the format and frequency of future MCs. And we are mindful of considering ways to ensure inclusive participation and substantive engagement over the two days by looking at various modalities that have proven effective, such as the prior circulation of written statements by delegations, break-out sessions, and guide questions. It would also be important to provide a space for informal engagement and networking.

4.90. The representative of Indonesia delivered the following statement:

4.91. Many of the mandated issues are coming from the Doha Development Round and I would like to further reaffirm Indonesia's commitment that our utmost priority is in concluding the unresolved mandated issues under this Round. With that in mind, allow me to highlight several issues of our interest. On Agriculture, I believe that the agriculture negotiations have reached a critical juncture. With several months left prior to MC13, we need to expedite our works to bridge the gap. In this regard, we share the view on the importance of having a concrete outcome in the next MC13. However, it is clear that such outcome cannot be achieved without real efforts to fix the on-going historical imbalances of the agriculture trade sector. Moreover, we also note that there have been other submissions that tried to address the issue of PSH as well as Chair's efforts to narrow the differences. In this regard, Indonesia along with proponents continue to see the importance of text-based negotiations that are based on document [JOB/AG/229](#), which represents the interests of 80 WTO Members and more than 80% of the world's population. To move the discussion forward, Indonesia stands ready to early start the text-based negotiation and engage constructively. Together, we need to ensure that permanent solution on the issue of public stockholding for food security purposes, as mandated by the WTO's Ministerial Decisions in Bali and Nairobi, can finally be achieved at MC13. On the work programme of e-commerce, we are of the view that the issues discussed in the dedicated discussions on e-commerce represent the concerns of all WTO Members, especially developing countries and LDCs, over the difficulties they face in contributing to global digital trade. There is still a wide digital divide, which was reflected in the meeting, and needs to be addressed urgently. With regard to the issue of moratorium, Indonesia is of the view that WTO Members, particularly developing countries and LDCs, should be given instruments and policy space to support public policy objectives while at the same time upholding national sovereignty. We are of the view that a moratorium in the long run would be beneficial for developing countries and LDCs to promote local companies, especially MSMEs and their digital talents. This will enable them to compete globally with international companies, as well as to formulate other strategic policies, including domestic software development, human resource quality improvement, and other strategic policies. Therefore, Indonesia welcomes the plan of the Facilitator of the Dedicated Discussion on E-Commerce Meeting, to have an active and intensive discussion on issues of our concern in

response to the implementation of fair digital trade, especially on the issue of moratorium, at the last 4 meetings of the upcoming dedicated discussion, prior to the implementation of MC13. On fisheries subsidies, the last four clusters of fish weeks are valuable in enabling members to identify elements that are important for members and brought them to the text-based negotiation. While different views remain, there was a common interest to discipline those who have contributed to the depletion of global fish stocks, namely the large-scale industrial fishing. There has also been widespread affirmation that effective and appropriate special and differential treatment must remain an integral part of the comprehensive agreement. Indeed, we need an agreement that target the most responsible, instead of distributing the responsibility in equal share to all members, including small fishing nations. This is the spirit that we hold, as we drafted and submitted document [RD/TN/RL/172](#). Now, it is time to put our negotiating hat on, and Indonesia stands ready to engage and work with other members in the next phase of our negotiation. On Paragraph 8 Ministerial Decision on TRIPS Agreement, I would be remiss if I do not, once again, reiterate our disappointment at the collective failure of WTO and its members of our inability to reach an agreement on the extension of the decision to include therapeutics and diagnostics at the mandated time. I will not repeat our arguments as to why the accessibility, availability and affordability of countermeasures that include vaccine, therapeutics and diagnostics, are vital to developing members and LDC, because it is clear that the lack of one or the other will severely impact the response to the pandemic in a country. On that note, while we acknowledge the Chair's effort to conduct a thematic session to further inform our move forward, we cannot afford to have this protracted discussion with no end in sight. Therefore, we further stress the need to have a trigger ready mechanism or mechanism for applying flexibilities (including TRIPS waivers) by default in time of crisis. We want to see more work to be done in this area. Concerning dispute settlement reform, our utmost priority is filling the vacancy of the Appellate Body to make it operational as mandated by the DSU. This issue can be resolved in a separate manner, and therefore should be delinked with the discussion on the dispute settlement reform as a whole. On that note, Indonesia has been actively participating and contributing ideas in the discussion that are interests-based, instead of position-based. Thus, our interest is security and predictability of the system, that is only achievable through the upholding of the two-tier dispute settlement system. Furthermore, all interests in the discussion shall be brought together as a whole package to the Minister, not in a piecemeal basis. We are not interested in any other way. In addition to the priority topics that I have mentioned, I would like to also highlight the importance of WTO Reform, especially to ensure WTO's relevance and enable the delivery of WTO's support for members to address multiple global challenges in world trade. To this end, we have had fruitful discussion and identified valuable inputs, including the most recent informal meeting on WTO Reform held last June. I believe that today we will further discuss on the topics related to the issue Secretariat and Civil Society and Business Advisory Groups. Thus, Indonesia stands ready to engage in the said discussion.

4.92. Now regarding the questions that you have circulated Chair, first, I believe all of the topics I have mentioned earlier deserve an equal amount of attention at the Senior Official Meeting, regardless of whether or not they move at a lesser pace than the other negotiated issues on the table. Yes, we can be pragmatic, but doing so at the expense of picking and choosing issues that are important for some and neglected others is not the kind of direction that we envisioned. Second, with that in mind, the presence of Senior Officials can provide necessary push either in moving a negotiation from a standstill, such as in the case of waiver to therapeutics and diagnostics, or in other issues, such as fisheries subsidies and dispute settlement reform. Certainly, we need necessary guidance for the next step forward before the ministerial meeting, to avoid what happened last year when we are pushed to agree on important outcomes in last minute. Third, while we agree that we must switch to high gear after the summer break and Indonesia will make an effort to do so, we should bear in mind that developing members and LDCs with small delegations may have the capacity constraint to follow all negotiations when they are held at the same time. Not acknowledging this issue means violating the basic principle of WTO, which are member-driven, inclusivity, and transparency to build a consensus. In conclusion, the Indonesian delegation remains committed to working collaboratively with all Members to address all these mandated issues. Only through inclusive and constructive engagement we can achieve outcomes that benefit all WTO Members in furthering their development, instead of upholding the status quo.

4.93. The representative of Türkiye delivered the following statement:

4.94. At MC13, we wish to build on the success of MC12. We echo your and many members' numerous appeals on managing our expectations from MC13 and being realistic. As we have indicated before, the Senior Officials meeting is an important step towards having a successful

Ministerial Conference. It is important to make the meeting fruitful by having a focused agenda so that Senior Officials can provide needed practical and political impetus for our work. Regarding your first question on the priority topics, WTO Reform obviously has to be a part of the agenda. Starting with the reform on procedural aspects of the work undertaken in various WTO bodies, I believe that we can present a mature work to our Senior Officials, since we have achieved good progress on this matter. This is an important step in terms of improving the deliberative function of the WTO as having effective and efficiently working WTO bodies is essential for being able to make substantive reform. However, it is not only enough to have concrete results with regard to procedural aspects, but we also need to deliver in terms of substance, particularly in areas that need urgent action. Dispute settlement reform is the first of these areas. We are not expecting to have decisions at this stage; however, we can determine broad principles that will guide our work and possibly a concrete timetable to achieve results. Informal negotiations ongoing at the delegate level should be concluded before the end of this year and the outcome paper should be circulated to Members as soon as possible to allow time for capitals to evaluate the draft text and conclude formalized negotiations until MC13. Other priority areas include agriculture and food security, development and the second phase of fisheries subsidies negotiations. After MC12, agriculture negotiations did not move in the way many members would wish for. However, we welcome the positive atmosphere at CoASS meeting earlier this week and believe that the more members from different groups engage with each other, the more chance of success we have. We hope that engagement can be intensified after the summer break and based on that engagement, our Senior Officials may help us in identifying the focus of our work and how we can deliver. In that context, we have to also consider the importance attached by members to food security and their intention to reach an outcome in this matter. With regard to the fisheries subsidies negotiations, if we manage to proceed as planned, we will be having two clusters of text-based negotiations prior to the SOM. It would be useful to determine convergence areas as well as areas we cannot proceed further at technical level. We can ask from our senior officials political and practical guidance, where we need decision-making power to come towards convergence. Thus, the SOM could be a productive one serving its purpose. With regard to the modalities of meetings, we continuously emphasize the importance of ensuring full participation, transparency and inclusiveness in the process leading up to MC13. In this regard, we support the format you suggested for the SOM. On your second question on how to best channel efforts during the fall, we are also supportive of the roadmap that you are planning in the lead up to the Senior Officials Meeting. We believe that if we can agree on the items, we would like our senior officials to focus on, then we can channel our efforts to conclude the technical work on those items. We have to do everything that could be done at technical and HODs level and reach the stage where we need political guidance, since we cannot expect from our senior officials to focus on technical aspects of the discussions. Along the way, we think it would be good to further empower the GC and relevant bodies to reach decisions whenever needed.

4.95. The representative of Malaysia delivered the following statement:

4.96. On Fisheries Subsidies, Malaysia would like to register our appreciation to Ambassador Gunnarsson for initiating a transparent and inclusive approach, and we would like to congratulate the Chair and his team for the completion of another productive Fish Week, last week. For the past two Fish Weeks, we have received new submissions from Members, and these well-thought proposals have successfully guided our discussions and assisted us to further understand Members' interests and concerns. We have also heard Members' views and feedback on the elements that they want to see to be in the 'future' text - that could be the basis for future negotiations; in this regard, we observed that there are still significant gaps between Members in some core issues. Nevertheless, based on the current momentum, we do believe that we are on the right track, and look forward to continuing our constructive discussions after the Summer Break. On Agriculture, Malaysia has participated in the CoA SS meeting and dedicated sessions held earlier this week, and we welcome Chair's process of listing the key elements derived from Members' submissions to guide and stimulate our discussions. In the last few months, we have intensified our discussions in two contentious issues - namely, the domestic support and public stockholding for food security purposes (PSH). While we observed that Members' positions are still widely diverged, Malaysia considers these conversations are crucial and helpful. On this note, we would like to register our sincere appreciation to all proponents, especially to those who has tabled their comprehensive fact-based proposals to facilitate our discussions, and to find the middle-ground. On Trade and Development, we would like to thank Ambassador Hassan for her leadership and dedication in advancing these important discussions. Malaysia has deliberately stressed and will continue to emphasise that the reform process must prioritise the development needs of developing members and LDCs; and the S&DT must continue to be an integral part of the current and future WTO agreements. On proposals put

forth by G90 related to the S&DT, Malaysia looks forward to engaging constructively with other Members in the upcoming discussions. Senior Officials Meeting; I believe most of us, if not all of us, are on the same page. However, I concur with you that we need to wait a bit longer, to identify and confirm what we should write on that page. At this stage, Malaysia doesn't want to single-out any specific item to be included in the SOM's wish list. Our only wish is for the Senior Officials Meeting to be a productive one, and able to facilitate our work in Geneva by providing the much-needed political guidance for some contentious and sticky issues. In ensuring this, the heavy-lifting needs to be done right after the Summer Break – by all of us. Having said all the above, let me conclude my intervention by stressing – Malaysia has always and will continue our strong support for a fair, open and non-discriminatory rules-based multilateral trading system. On this note, we strongly believe that a fully functioning of the two-tier dispute settlement system is fundamental to this organization and must remain as the central pillar to reflect the credibility of this House.

4.97. The representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia delivered the following statement:

4.98. We welcome the proposal to move forward with the Senior Officials' Meeting, which we hope will provide a significant boost to the work programme in Geneva. As we have pointed out before, the results achieved at the previous Ministerial Conference were positive. Although not ideal, they struck a delicate balance that encompassed the minimum consensus among Members. It is vital that we deliver on the decisions taken at the last Ministerial Conference and address remaining topics, while highlighting the need to promote our countries' development so as to respond to the multiple crises we face. In regard to agriculture, we underscore the importance of pursuing credible reform that takes into account the concerns of all Members. We also highlight the issues of food security and sovereignty to ensure better conditions for production, effective access to regional and global local value chains, the various forms of market access, the elimination of unjustified tariff barriers and the improvement of living conditions for farmers and producers, in full harmony with the environment. We require a systemic and multi-dimensional response, but it is also true that we cannot be selective in choosing the elements of that response. If we are to incorporate climate change into our discussions, for example, all relevant elements must be included, such as CBDR and financial assistance, which are essential for mitigation and adaptation for resilient agriculture. In regard to the TRIPS Decision, we support the extension of the waiver. We regret that consensus has not yet been reached. We need to strengthen commitments to find a convergence solution as mandated by Ministers at the previous Conference. This issue is still important. Working for fairer, more equitable and affordable access to treatments and diagnostic tests should remain on our agenda, and as mentioned by the distinguished Ambassador of Colombia, we should also consider discussing this issue and finding convergences with the discussions taking place at the WHO on a potential treaty on responses to health emergencies. It is also imperative to reinforce our commitment to re-establishing a fully functioning dispute settlement system and to make this system accessible to all. In regard to reform, we reiterate that international trade is key to promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth and development. In this context, WTO Reform should consider the asymmetries of Members, and of course, we believe that the principle of special and differential treatment is of vital importance to developing countries in order to leverage the development benefits of international trade. We hope that the outcomes of the preparatory meetings toward MC13 will help us to fulfil the mandates of MC12 and outstanding priority topics that should be clearly identified in order to present a concrete agenda and format to senior officials. But we must move forward, and in no way go backward. We reiterate that decisions should be taken in a transparent and inclusive manner, respecting the legitimate positions and expectations of all WTO Members.

4.99. The representative of Nepal delivered the following statement:

4.100. I wish to associate myself with the statement made by Djibouti on behalf of the LDC Group and wish to add few points. My delegation appreciates your good initiation to organize senior officials meeting in October which, we hope, will be able to accelerate the possible outcomes of the MC13 both engaging in Geneva not only in multilateral mode but also in bilateral and regional level, and returning to the capital. In this regard, my delegation would like to propose several items as the priority topics at the meeting of the Senior Officials in October 2023. Firstly, on LDC graduation proposal, meeting the graduation criteria from LDC category does not necessarily mean that the countries do not face any trade related challenges rather they have to cope with new economic environment, entering into the competition zone from the comfort zone in principle, therefore the proposal of LDC Group on smooth transition package should be in the priority, we are optimistic some reasonable progress in the upcoming General Council meeting next week on this proposal.

Secondly, the proposal on the extension of waiver under TRIPS agreement on production and supply of COVID-19 diagnostics and therapeutics, G90's 10 agreement specific proposal, WTO Reform focused on development dimension and dispute settlement, ecommerce work program and moratorium, and agricultural reforms including PSH and food security issues are in the priority. While discussing about WTO Reform, trade deficit related challenges of any member should also be in the priority. Any member facing huge trade gaps after joining the WTO such as having several times higher export-import ratio like 1:10 (though ratio threshold can be discussed further) should be given adequate flexibility for adopting needful policy space in a non-discriminatory manner until it comes back below the threshold. Furthermore, concerns of members especially the LDCs, which joined the WTO through accession process with high level of commitment and obligations beyond their capacity should be addressed. To facilitate the Senior Officials meeting, it would be better to enhance members' engagement to develop textual options of possible decisions in the agreed topics by convening informal meetings before the SOM.

4.101. The representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela delivered the following statement:

4.102. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reiterates the importance of the centrality of the issue of development as a cross cutting theme that should be addressed in all forums of this Organization. We are well placed to move forward in all the negotiations, but these should produce real results, not cosmetic ones, so that the WTO can fulfil all the functions for which it was created, in keeping with the principles agreed in this Organization, respecting consensus and abiding by the negotiating mandates. In this regard, the WTO's response to the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be a priority for our delegation. Consequently, we reiterated our call to urgently approve the waiver from certain provisions of the TRIPS Agreement for the prevention, containment and treatment of COVID-19, which we co-sponsored. On fisheries subsidies, it is important to maintain our focus on the elements set out in the negotiating mandate reflected in Target 14.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially the inclusion of appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries. In this area, we hope that more flexible rules for artisanal and small-scale fisheries can be adopted. With respect to the other negotiating areas, we note that the Members remain far apart on agriculture, but we continue to work hard to achieve substantive outcomes on public stockholding for food security purposes and the special safeguard mechanism. Concerning the negotiations on special and differential treatment (S&DT), we hope for the adoption of a decision that will allow us to achieve results based on the G90 proposals, which our country supports. Regarding the other functions of the WTO, we consider it vital to launch the selection processes for Appellate Body vacancies. We also believe that that any process we embark on over the coming months, including the Senior Officials' Meeting in October, must be transparent and inclusive, and there must be true political will to understand the real needs of developing and least developed countries. We sincerely hope that there will not be a repeat of the process of the 12th Ministerial Conference. Despite its critical and firm stances on world trade relations, which give preference to goods rather than sustainable development, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has always worked constructively within the WTO. That is why we reaffirm our commitment to building a robust, mutually supportive, fair and predictable multilateral trading system, based on common and transparent rules, that meets the interests of the world's peoples and befits the moment in history that we are having to live through.

4.103. The representative of Brunei Darussalam delivered the following statement:

4.104. On the preparations for the MC13, Brunei Darussalam is of the view that the mandates from the MC12 would be a good basis of deliverables for the MC13. Similar to DG's proposal earlier, we suggest the Secretariat could prepare a "List of Deliverables" that would also highlight the progress of work being carried out and it should be regularly updated. From this list, we can identify deliverables that have the highest convergence, so we can focus on their finalization before MC13. Notwithstanding this, I wish to refer to Brunei Darussalam's priorities which we highlighted at the April TNC and HoDs Meeting. Based on this "List of Deliverables", it would be useful to have a "Roadmap" that could indicate a realistic timeline of work and targeted outcome. We note that maybe not all deliverables could be completed by the MC13. However, progress reports on ongoing issues could serve as key documents for the Ministers to provide political guidance or renew mandates at the MC13. On the preparations of the October Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM), Brunei Darussalam supports your proposed 'Roadmap' as well as your approach and format for the SOM. We also take note that it might be early to have the agenda now. In this regard, we also suggest that the "list of Deliverables" and "Roadmap" for the MC13, which we have proposed earlier, could be tabled at the October SOM which we hope could facilitate the discussions. We continue to reiterate our call for

better organization of meetings' schedule to avoid as much as possible meeting clashes to allow effective participations of small missions.

4.105. The representative of Singapore, speaking as Co-Convenor of the Joint Statement Initiative on E-Commerce, delivered the following statement:

4.106. I will start by providing, on behalf of the other co-convenors Australia and Japan, a quick update on the Joint Statement Initiative (JSI) on E-Commerce cluster meeting for the second quarter of 2023. First, the cluster meetings in the second quarter of 2023 were productive in fostering Members' understanding on key issues including data flows and localisation. The co-conveners also regularly discussed development issues to better understand how the JSI can support developing and LDC members to tap opportunities in digital trade. Second, we continued to make progress in streamlining other issues under discussion, including single windows, personal information or data protection, source code, and cryptography. Third, we were pleased to have held our first Head of Delegation (HOD) meeting on JSI on E-Commerce earlier this month. DG Ngozi reiterated the importance of the E-Commerce negotiations in addressing modern business realities, while all other Members unanimously emphasised the importance of doubling down on efforts to achieve substantial conclusion by end 2023.

4.107. The representative of Singapore delivered the following statement:

4.108. We agree that it will be crucial to make wise use of our Senior Officials' time and allow them to engage substantively. The structure of the SOM should allow us to achieve two objectives; namely (a) to create an environment for our Senior Officials to have honest conversations that goes beyond what we have been hearing here in Geneva; and (b) give clear directions to Geneva delegates in the run-up to MC13. Hence, we agree with the work plans that Director-General has outlined in preparation for the SOM. In Singapore's view, the SOM should advance negotiations on issues mandated by MC12 such as the restoration of the Dispute Settlement System (DSS) and the moratorium on custom duties on electronic transmissions. The SOM should also narrow gaps in on-going negotiations as Agriculture and Fisheries Subsidies; and have an exchange of views on emerging issues such as nexus of trade and environmental sustainability as well as digitalisation. On the substance and possible outcomes for MC13, Singapore sees the potential deliverables as one, meaningful progress to restore a binding and two-tier dispute settlement system; two, a globally relevant outcome on food security, three, to keep business certainty in these challenging economic times through the extension of the E-Commerce moratorium; and four, to acknowledge the development dimension of the WTO through the extension of unilateral trade preferences for graduated LDCs, if not already done by next week or the SOM in October.

4.109. The representative of Bangladesh delivered the following statement:

4.110. The delegation of Bangladesh aligns with the statement delivered by Djibouti on behalf of the LDCs and flags some general points. We expect that some issues will be mature by that time to be part of concrete decisions and results in the MC13. In this regard, we consider LDC graduation package mature enough to be part of an early harvest before the MC13. We are heartened that many Members have been supporting this plea of the LDCs. A fuller fisheries subsidies agreement, food insecurity, TRIPS waiver to cover therapeutics and diagnostics for the future pandemic, implementation of the decision of the past MCs particularly those related to the LDCs, e-commerce work programme with development elements, solutions to the AB impasse, and improving the works of the WTO committees and councils that would support the smaller delegations and LDCs are some of our priority issues. The work under WTO Reform must be organized based on identified needs of the 'necessary reform items' and ensure that any reform must not lead to any alteration of the multilateral and intergovernmental character of the WTO. We urge Members to consider the LDC Group's submission [JOB/GC/223/Rev.1](#) in April 2022. Development Agenda should be prioritized in all WTO bodies. We thank the GC Chair for announcing the annotated agenda for the GC meeting. This is an instance of work in progress. In the MC12 outcome document paragraph 4, Ministers recognize the importance and urgency of addressing the challenges and concerns regarding the dispute settlement system including the Appellate Body and commit to conduct discussions with the view to having a fully and well-functioning dispute settlement system accessible to all Members by 2024. Here the commitment is clearly to conduct discussions. Including Bangladesh, a majority of the WTO Members, in fact more than two third, are cosponsors of a submission ([WT/DSB/W/609/Rev.23](#)) that requests the DSB to make effective decision to launch selection process to fill in the vacancy of the Appellate Body. Without the Appellate Body, the DS system is

not fully functional. Therefore, discussion for the AB appointment becomes a top priority. Suggestions and inputs from individual Member or group of Members should be the basis of such discussions. We thank the Director-General for informing us regarding her Business and Civil Society Advisory Group. Our delegation takes good note of this information. We hope that the Member-driven nature of the WTO will be continued. We also hope that the WTO Public Forum will continue to be an informal forum for informed dialogues among Members and other stakeholders to shed new light on any specific issue. We believe that WTO's primary interface is with government representatives and officials based in Geneva missions including the internal coordination and consultative frameworks that all Members have domestically where inputs from business and civil society remain at the core. The delegation of Bangladesh looks forward to working with Members on carrying out the works assigned by Ministers as well as for a meaningful senior officials' meeting in October this year.

4.111. The representative of Chinese Taipei delivered the following statement:

4.112. On the arrangement for the October SOM, we have a couple of overall expectations, several suggestions about the approach and some suggestions about the specific topics to be addressed by the senior officials. We hope that the October SOM will set up the goals for MC13. We also hope that the SOM will help delegations tackle difficult issues. In this regard, we must identify and present to the senior officials a "limited" number of clearly defined critical issues to be addressed. We agree that the meetings should be arranged to allow interactive engagements by senior officials. In this regard, having break-out and parallel sessions is a good approach. The SOM agenda should be designed to lead to focused discussions and to "discourage" senior officials to make overly broad statement. In order to have focused discussions, it is important to properly formulate appropriate "leading questions" to attract "positive answers" from the senior officials. If we can harvest as many "yeses" from the senior officials in October as possible, we will be in a better position to have productive outcomes in the later part of the year leading to MC13. About the questions to be posted to senior officials, it is preferable to formulate the questions in a strait forward and not-too-complicated manner so as not to lose focus. We should also avoid giving senior officials "technical questions" for them to answer. Such questions would not be helpful for convergence. About specific topics to be addressed, the WTO Reform on its deliberative function is certainly an appropriate topic. But since there have been many good proposals being widely supported, it is appropriate merely to have a report on the deliberative function reform for the SOM to recognize. Fisheries subsidies negotiation is another critical topic for senior officials to tackle. This would mean that in the September fish week, we will need to have a new chair's text. Certain critical bracketed elements in the chair's text can be discussed by the senior officials. Senior officials should of course discuss agriculture. Given the urgent nature of food security, the focus of agriculture can be on the global food insecurity. We also suggest including e-commerce as a topic for the SOM. We hope Members will be able to identify any difficult issues for the SOM to overcome toward the continuation of Moratorium. For dispute settlement reform, we are satisfied with the format and progress of the current informal discussions. In case the dispute settlement reform is to be a topic of the SOM, it could be for stock-taking purpose. It might not be desirable to transform the current informal setting into a formal one. For those Members having participated in JSIs, it should be the opportunity for their senior officials to recognize the progress and to set their goals of concluding the JSI negotiations prior to MC13. It is also an opportunity to reach out to senior officials of the non-participating Members, to exchange views and to clarify any possible concerns about joining the initiatives, so as to expand the participants.

4.113. The representative of Pakistan delivered the following statement:

4.114. We take note of your suggestions and proposals on the structure of these meetings and share your vision to hold these sessions in a productive manner and avoid engagement in a way that might only reinforce existing positions causing more harm than good. That is surely not the intent of senior official meeting. Before providing our comments on the questions posed in the convening notice, allow me to make some general comments. The global economic context coupled with the climate challenges that we are currently witnessing and living every day, should compel us to take meaningful action. Since MC12, you have been pointing out that to stay relevant, WTO needs to reform itself and Pakistan has consistently reiterated that in order to address issues of the global commons all players have to adopt cooperative and not a competitive approach to arrive at an optimal outcome. We do appreciate the efforts made by the membership to find common landing zones on issues of critical importance but for that to happen we might need to go an extra mile to make this organization 'fit-for-purpose' and to respond effectively to the poly-crisis the world faces

today. If we fail, the WTO might be able to deliver for certain countries or business interests, but it will not be able to deliver for the global commons' issues, at least. In this vein, it is important for the membership to agree to a package of trigger ready mechanisms for LDCs and developing countries to save them from succumbing to a complex political, economic and climate induced poly crisis. Now before turning to your questions, we heard members today sharing not only the issues that they feel are important for SOM but also reiterating their well-known positions on these issues. We feel this is exactly what needs to be avoided to have a productive SOM. Members need to start working now on how and where flexibilities can be found for identification of horizontally balanced paths at SOM leading to balanced outcomes at MC13 as hinted by Ambassador from Mauritius this afternoon. Pakistan remains a strong supporter of 'necessary reform' of the WTO in order to enhance its efficacy and increase its relevance in terms of global economic governance. Pakistan strongly believes that it is important to have a two tiered, fully functional and accessible DSB by the time our Ministers meet again. We believe a positive political support in this regard during the Senior Officials Meeting will be necessary and useful to achieve an outcome on this agenda. Notwithstanding the form and configurations of the reform efforts around DS reform, Pakistan believes that the process must be based on core WTO principles of inclusiveness, multilateralism, consensus, openness and transparency. For the Fisheries Subsidies Agreement, Pakistan supports the second wave of negotiations. We are happy to affirm that we have witnessed inclusivity and transparency in the fisheries negotiations in phase 2 and we commend the way the work has been undertaken so far by the chair. We are hopeful that the Senior Officials Meeting will help bridge the differences among membership to allow MC13 to deliver conclusively and comprehensively on the mandate of SDG 14.6. Pakistan appreciates the work done by the members in the Working Group under Committee on Agriculture in terms of Paragraph 8 of the Ministerial Declaration on emergency response to food insecurity. However, we still see differences among members on approaches to ensure food security for LDCs and NFDCs. The decisions for food security for millions of impoverished living in LDCs and NFDCs would possibly require political support to agree to a report by the WG due in November this year. On the issue of wider reforms in agriculture, we do see that subsidy concentration is an important and critical issue standing in the way of fair and just competition among the membership. However, we do note that the mandate from our Ministers for a permanent solution to the PSH needs immediate solution and we look forward to constructive engagement from members on this issue at the Senior Officials Meeting and urge members to de-escalate on sequencing issues around agriculture negotiations. We are also mindful of the importance and sensitivities of the proponents calling for a termination of the e-commerce moratorium and reinvigoration of the work program. As you said this could be one of the important issues where the senior officials can provide clear directions moving towards MC13. Before I close, allow me to reflect on the issue of TRIPS Waiver. As we draw close to the October meeting of the Senior Officials and subsequently MC13, the prospects of a favourable decision for the humanity are discouraging. We would like the membership to come-up with a timely decision on this important decision of extension of the waiver to therapeutics and diagnostics. Finally, there are more active engagements in areas other than the ones I indicated today. These are to us, the first contours of the areas likely to be discussed at the Senior Official Meeting and that without prejudging the work and efforts that members are putting and will be putting as we come closer to the summer break. However, doubling efforts in discussions and deliberations in areas where there is traction would remain our preferred way of engagement and it would be useful that the list of issues is not too long making it difficult for small delegations to attend to each discussion in a productive manner.

4.115. The representative of Hong Kong, China delivered the following statement:

4.116. With progresses so far on different fronts, Hong Kong, China remains optimistic that we are building the foundation for a successful MC13. On fisheries, we are pleased to note the progress made in the second wave negotiations and is confident that Members will keep up the momentum as we move on to the text-based negotiations soon. We are hopeful that the coming Senior Officials Meeting would provide further impetus to achieving, by MC13, the two goals of bringing into force the Fisheries Subsidies Agreement and further enhancing the disciplines. On this note, we are glad to report that Hong Kong, China is planning to deposit our Instrument of Acceptance for the Fisheries Subsidies Agreement soon, later this quarter. On e-commerce, we note that some Members have called for a special session on e-commerce in the margins of the Senior Officials Meeting; Hong Kong, China supports this approach, in the hope that high-level dialogues would help drive convergence on issues of common interests, such as legal architecture and horizontal disciplines, and help the membership reach substantial conclusion by the end of this year. As for MC13, making the moratorium permanent or at least securing its extension continues to be one of Hong Kong, China's key priorities. In view of the "sunset" clause in the MC12 ministerial decision, we hope that

the relevant discussion will commence soon. On IFD, Hong Kong, China welcomes the recent conclusion of negotiations on the text of the IFD Agreement. The IFD initiative has so far attracted participation of over two-thirds of the membership. We encourage all Members to positively review the text with a view to incorporating this meaningful outcome to the WTO architecture, in the hope that we may reach another landmark by MC13. On dispute settlement system, restoring a fully functioning, two-tiered dispute settlement system accessible by all is Hong Kong, China's top priority. The timeline set out in the MC12 Outcome Document is tight. Hong Kong, China values the informal substance-based discussion currently underway, and the target to concretise ideas and start a drafting exercise in the coming months. We urge Members to keep up the momentum and aim for significant progress by MC13. On WTO Reform, Hong Kong, China is delighted to see the progresses made on improving day-to-day functioning and procedural matters by various WTO bodies and the Secretariat. To provide further impetus to the process, Hong Kong, China suggests that GC Chair may revisit the idea of holding a dedicated discussion on the negotiating function and appointing facilitator(s)/ "Friends of the Chairperson" to assist the process, for discussion of common emerging issues and horizontal procedural reforms. The Secretariat may also consider extending the current efforts of categorising proposals to cover also substantive issues. With efforts on all fronts, we expect that this could form a good progress report for the Senior Officials Meeting and, in time, concrete outcomes at MC13.

4.117. The representative of the United States delivered the following statement:

4.118. I am going to focus on reactions to the roadmap and the framework laid out by the Director-General for the October SOM. People know where our positions are on substantive issues, so I do not need to dwell on that. The more important part right now is how we set ourselves up for the SOM because that will be a test run for how we set ourselves up for the Ministerial Conference and again recognizing that what you laid out with a few ideas as of now and how it can evolve – I do think that they did make a lot of sense to me but I would like to take your principles one by one because there are other issues that have been raised. In terms of your possible organizing principles, the number one with stocktaking of where we are on all issues and that that would include a factual state of play report by the Secretariat. We fully support that. We would note that, if you go back and look at the MC12 outcome document, there are a lot of "to-do's" that we agreed to that involve reporting. We certainly would encourage that this stocktaking starts now and be taken by the relevant committees in the Secretariat. Presenting that to the Senior Officials at that meeting would be a good way of trying to set some things aside or make sure that they are headed in the right direction so that less attention or less effort has to go into them as we try to deal with the harder issues. Going to your second principle concerning blessing of things already agreed – where you mentioned reform by doing and LDC graduation. I fully agree. We will be talking about this at the General Council meeting next week, so I am not going to dwell on it. I do hope that we can have at least the Annex 1 issue for LDC graduation addressed and that would be something that in the SOM hopefully the Senior Officials could bless because the General Council can agree to many of these things, and this is something that to us is part of reform by doing that we need to get more in the habit of doing. On the reform by doing and the issue of procedural reforms, it was also mentioned, and has been noted by others that there is a lot of good work that has been done that I do not think we need to spend more time in the General Council. We just need to acknowledge this. In this regard, there is a very comprehensive status report that was put together by the Secretariat. We fully support that these are things that can be put together, can be sent ahead of time and can be taken care of. Whatever reports and whatever the agenda is for the Senior Officials meeting, hopefully I would think that it should be circulated two weeks before the SOM. This would be important in order for the Senior Officials to be prepared to have the reports available so that they can review them with sufficient time. We all have interagency and internal processes that we have to do so to be better prepared, having an agenda and all the relevant documentation prepared ahead of time, with sufficient time is really useful. Your third principle is resolving specific issues, and you did say to be determined. I agree that maybe now is not the time to cut-off what specific issues can be put before Senior Officials but again we should all go back and look at what we agreed at MC12 that we were going to be delivering for MC13 and start looking at what things realistically speaking could be taken care off ahead of time. In this regard, I take note of the comment made by China about no new issues after the Senior Officials meeting. That is an admirable goal to have. We already have a very loaded agenda as we will talk about next week at the General Council meeting. There are a lot of papers on the table, which is great, because it demonstrates that people are interested, but we need to start thinking of what we are doing with all those things, what things are ready for decisions at the Ministerial or before and what things, in some conversations that we have been having, what are the things that we can put in the basket of "let's set up this conversation going

forward with a view to the future". This goes to your fourth principle which is using the Senior Officials to point the way for deliverables and for political guidance and direction. The SOM is a meeting where we can do that and start lining up the things that we should try to get done before. We all know the things that are going to need a lot more discussion, but this does take me to a comment that has been made regarding the issue of trying to avoid clashes of meetings, which is an issue even for us. In this regard, we need to start taking care of issues so that we have the time to do other things. Dispute settlement reform sounds great but again this requires engaging, and we are happy with the process that has been led by Mr. Marco Molina. We hope that Members will continue engaging so that we can have something, and we are open to early harvesting or getting things that have convergence to a place where we can set them aside and we can open the space for more conversations on the more technically difficult things. You did mention you were going to have meetings in different configurations going forward which we fully support, and we also fully support that we should be organizing ourselves to have conversations – honest ones like those that were led by Ambassador Theodore (Canada) yesterday. It is impossible to have that kind of conversation with everybody in the room, but every grouping and geographical region should be represented, and we would fully support this as we move forward to MC13.

4.119. The representative of Jamaica delivered the following statement:

4.120. We can support the roadmap you have outlined. The Senior Officials meeting should be focused, result oriented and should set parameters for our work leading up to MC13. Senior officials should have dedicated discussions on fisheries subsidies, agriculture, e-commerce and WTO Reform. However, we can have a horizontal session where specific questions are put to Senior Officials with a view to narrow differences on or create momentum for issues such as LDCs graduation, dispute settlement, food security, pandemic preparedness and response, and services. On fisheries subsidies, we should adhere to W/20 as much as possible with doable tweaks or streamlining to address specific concerns of members. Radically changing the approach and structure of W20 will only widen divergencies and put at risk a success for delivery at MC13. The *de minimis* threshold for small fishing nations should remain a key component of the special and differential treatment provisions. For agriculture, Jamaica's priorities are in the areas of domestic support, SSM, cotton, PSH and a follow-up outcome on paragraph 8 of the MC12 declaration on food insecurity for LDCs and NFIDCs. As a deliverable for MC13, we can, target the streamlining of green box disciplines to close loopholes in existing rules, which we believe can be resolved by strengthening transparency provisions. The African Group and Costa Rica have put forward proposals with useful elements on domestic support, which we believe can be integrated by the proponents to form a document that can be the basis for negotiations going forward in the CoA SS. With this in mind, we should target a draft work programme that can be endorsed by Senior Officials as the basis for negotiations preparatory to Ministers' adoption of that work programme at MC13, with a deadline for a final outcome at MC14. We also believe that the Working Group on Food Security can finalise a report for endorsement of the CoA with concrete recommendations for LDCs and NFIDCs, which Ministers can adopt at MC13. As it relates to WTO Reform, we believe that administrative reform by doing should be a matter for WTO bodies may not need to be escalated to Senior Officials or Ministers for approval. Senior Officials should be put in a position to provide clear guidance on the way forward preparatory to MC13 on issues such as organization of Ministerial Conferences, collaboration with external stakeholders, trade and development, the way forward for S&DT and DSB reform. The other issues can be targeted for MC14. We believe the WTO should seek to agree a renewal of the work programme on e-Commerce based on the outcome of the discussions we have had over the past few months under the leadership of Ambassador Dwarka-Canabady. We also believe that the WTO should agree to the extension of the e-commerce moratorium. Senior Officials should be asked to narrow the divergences in these areas. Jamaica is of the view that Senior Officials should also be able to agree on modalities for LDCs graduation and if this is not doable, Senior Officials should significantly narrow the areas of divergencies so that a decision can be finalized by Geneva-based delegates for adoption by Ministers at MC13. In this regard, we would support calls for the appointment of a facilitator on LDCs graduation. Following on the MC12 declaration on the WTO's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and preparedness for future pandemics, we believe that the Chair of the General Council can lead a process for the preparation of a comprehensive report for Minister's adoption at MC13. Paragraph 10 of the MC12 Outcome Document sets out the importance of increasing participation of developing members in global services trade. Building on the recent launch of the WTO-World Bank publication entitled Trade in Services for Development, it is important for the WTO to have informal meetings or information sharing sessions. This includes work in the various committees after the summer break, so that we can have discussions on the topics covered by the publication, with a view to finding avenues for incorporating services in the outcomes of

MC13. We fully support the way forward by the Chair of the CTD-SS. We will support the facilitators and work towards delivery of the targeted ASPs by MC13. It is important that our processes remain truly member driven, fair, inclusive, transparent and takes into account constraints faced by smaller delegations. This fosters ownership of the processes. In closing we align ourselves to the statement by Kenya on behalf of the ACP Group.

4.121. The representative of Viet Nam delivered the following statement:

4.122. My delegation wishes to focus on Viet Nam's three high priorities: Fisheries Subsidies, Agriculture, and WTO Reform, including the Dispute Settlement Reform, among other priority issues. On Fisheries Subsidies negotiations, Viet Nam shared Members' positive comments on the good progress, the constructive engagements among Members, with our sincere appreciation to the Chair for his leadership and the Secretariat for their facilitation efforts. As there have been new ideas and approaches on the table from a number of Members, we see the need to have additional technical dialogues in the format of workshops or seminars with the participation of fisheries professional staffs and managers from Capital alongside the Fish-Week Clusters, so as to bring about greater understanding and help keep the negotiations well informed. On Agriculture, while noting Members' still diverse views, Viet Nam welcomes the high level of engagement among Members to identify common priorities and believes that the process can result in outcomes where Members' interests meet, including food security, supply chain resilience, trade sustainability, elimination of market distortions and dealing with modern challenges. We are committed to working in collaboration with other Members and ready to engage with others in any configuration to make progress. In addition to the two topics that we shared our views above, the WTO Reform is certainly another priority need to prepare for the SO Meeting in October and for the MC13, as indicated in a large amount of proposals already on the table. My delegation welcomes the understanding achieved from the results of dedicated sessions on Development Dimension in February early this year and on Deliberative Functions, Institutional Matters of the WTO last June, as well as significant efforts on the ground to streamline and improve the way the WTO works. We would like to reiterate the urgency of meeting the MC12 mandate to restore the fully and well-functioning Dispute Settlement System, in particular the Appellate Body, to provide security and predictability to the multilateral trading system. The Senior Officials Meeting obviously needs to focus on this issue. We believe that we need to take the advantage of the SO Meeting, and for that it is important for the SO Meeting to harvest certain elements, and to provide the political push and guidance on the roadmaps for moving the priorities topics towards deliverables at the MC13. Turning to the second question set forth by DG in the agenda, we are of the views that it is critical to facilitate the preparation work in a concrete, transparent, inclusive and results-oriented manner. Viet Nam wishes to join calls for a text-based package of MC13 outcomes, which could be presented in preliminary format to the SO Meeting to take advantage of this opportunity.

4.123. The representative of India delivered the following statement:

4.124. Our suggestion in agriculture is to begin text-based negotiation, particularly for a permanent solution to PSH. For this purpose, the submissions made by more than 80 members, in [JOB/AG/229](#), makes a good starting point. It also calls for using dynamic ERP; The present method of determining ERP on 1986/87/88 prices is hugely flawed and defies logic. This was demonstrated convincingly in the recent information sharing session on the 26 June, including in presentations made therein by IFPRI and OECD therein. We would also like to reiterate that no outcome in agriculture may be possible unless there is an outcome on permanent solution to PSH. In Fish, the NGR Chair deserves a huge compliment for greater transparency and inclusive participation in the process. This has led to better participation from the capitals too. We anticipate the same level of transparency in text-based negotiation. India reiterates that disciplines on fisheries subsidies agreement be balanced in current and future fishing needs, providing, appropriate and effective S&DT that protects the livelihoods of poor fishermen, addresses food security concerns, and provides future policy space, while recognizing and incorporating the principles of 'Polluter Pays' and CBDR-RC. As Capital based delegations will have frequent visit to Geneva as discussions intensified, WTO may like to take up with the Swiss authorities for providing longer period visas to such delegates at least till the MC13. The renewed activity in the CTD SS on G90 submissions is encouraging. We hope that these discussions pick up momentum going forward, for a meaningful outcome, and facilitators led discussion add to the transparency while expediting the discussions. We should be working sincerely to make tangible progress on other pending Ministerial mandates, particularly, Trips Waiver for therapeutics and diagnostics, restoration of a fully functional two-tier dispute resolution system including the appellate body, and other mandated issues on development dimension. Our

suggestions on the process and roadmap approaching SOM are broadly in line with your preliminary remarks earlier in the day. Further discussions on these would help. The detailed modalities for the senior officers meeting may be worked out early for better preparation and focused discussions. Discussion on options provided in para 20 of your report in JOB/TNC/109 will help in finalizing the structure of SOM. Senior Officers may be formally apprised of work done on the pending mandates from MC12 and past MCs by way of stock taking, including present status thereof. The items that are, for decision by the Minister; or for seeking further mandate; or for information, and the items that require further discussion. These status notes be shared in advance. We should take up mandated issues for MC12 and past MCs and not overload the agenda with newer issues. We already have a full plate. This would facilitate the SOM to set expectation level and finalize agenda for the Ministerial. Considering the modalities and road map requires developing further clarity in thought process, as you mentioned in your speech, your proposed informal discussions as TNC Chair and those of the GC Chair on this specific item, as early as possible, and in next HODS, would be of immense help for a serious work immediately after the summer break in an inclusive and transparent process.

4.125. The representative of Ecuador delivered the following statement:

4.126. Among the great challenges in which trade can contribute effectively, food security occupies a priority position for Ecuador especially as we head towards the SOM and MC13. Given our agricultural producing background and the relevance that agricultural production has for world food security, the Members of the Latin American region can and should contribute effectively to the debates on the subject in the WTO. This reinforces our commitment to advance the agricultural issue in the WTO – a matter that has been set aside for many years. Bearing this in mind, and as many will remember, several Latin American countries issued a Declaration on Agricultural Trade at MC12. Looking towards the future and the priority of the matter, on behalf of the Latin American countries signatories of the aforementioned Declaration on Agriculture, Ecuador will intervene on this point at next week's General Council meeting. In any case, I would like to reiterate Ecuador's position of supporting the reactivation of agricultural trade negotiations within the WTO – a matter of interest to all Members and, in particular, to those who are still developing and less advanced. This is long overdue – which has its own merits and support, and where delivery cannot wait any longer. In this regard, Ecuador supports Costa Rica's recent proposal, which seems to us to contain elements in the right direction and which can gradually facilitate Members' understanding. Another issue, of great relevance for Ecuador, refers to the contribution of trade and trade measures to the global response to the environmental crises, which, in addition to the impairment of the natural resources, have a negative impact on human health, the functioning of our economies, sustainable development and social dynamics such as migration and human settlements. For this reason, Ecuador supports the actions of the WTO in matters of trade and environment, both in the CTE and in future events on the work agenda of our organization, including at MC13. We likewise congratulate Ms. Josefina Bunge for her appointment as facilitator – as announced by the NGR Chair. Her knowledge of the subject and active participation that she has had in the past negotiations augur a successful performance. She has our support. We also commend Mr. Marco Molina for facilitating discussions on DS Reform. Finding an understanding on the matter is one of the essential tasks that we have pending as an organization and that Ecuador supports. On the SOM and the next stages of our work towards MC13, it is our understanding that the Director-General plans to hold consultations in September and that decisions on the organization of the High-Level Meeting would be taken at a meeting of Heads of Delegation on 10 October. In this regard, we suggest that, before the HODS meeting on 10 October, Members should have an indication of the results of these consultations. This would allow us to communicate them to our capitals and be ready to make informed, concrete decisions during the HODS meeting in preparation for the SOM.

4.127. The representative of Iceland delivered the following statement:

4.128. Like many other Members, we see three main priorities looking towards the fall and MC13. First would be WTO reform with dispute settlement being the absolute top priority there. The second one is the fisheries negotiations where we remain convinced that we can have an agreement by the end of the year and the third one is agriculture, admittedly a challenge, but also a shared responsibility of us all. And then on process, I simply say that we support your outline of the process towards MC13 including on the modalities for the Senior Officials meeting in October.

4.129. The representative of the Russian Federation delivered the following statement:

4.130. I have three points to deliver regarding our vision of the goals and preparation process for MC13. My delegation considers unilateral trade-restrictive actions to be WTO-inconsistent and a major risk that undermines the post-pandemic recovery process of the global economy. In our view, that risk just reinforces the need for a prompt reform of the WTO. The emerging trend of disregard for the WTO rules erodes the MTS. To correct this process of decay we urgently need to reinstall the mechanism ensuring consistency of Members' trade policies. That is why by MC13 it is imperative to deliver concrete results on restoration of a fully functioning dispute settlement system. Without that, the WTO will look like a house of cards. It is important to remember that the primary purpose of MCs is the adoption of systemically important decisions related to trade regulation. While procedural improvements may be a valid contribution to the success of MC13 and they merit our attention, they should not be the main focus of the preparatory process. The WTO Councils and Committees, as well as GC itself, should be able to refine their *modus operandi* through their regular work. The excessive attention to procedural matters will just distract us from effectively addressing the urgent trade issues and take away the focus from the negotiating function. We should avoid the scenario of the previous MC, when some major final arrangements were presented to most Members just minutes before their adoption. Such an approach will not fly this time. The MC13 outcomes package should be prepared in advance, with the involvement of all delegations. Disregard for transparency and inclusiveness are factors that will make it extremely difficult for most Members, including my delegation, to support the outcomes of MC13. This applies to our delegation as well. I hope that we will be able to overcome our differences in favour of constructive work for the benefit of all Members. This is the only way to produce meaningful results. I am still well within my time slot limits. I do not want to follow the example of our British colleague, who exceeded the limit of his intervention by nearly twice the amount of time allotted and tested our patience by repeating ungrounded allegations against my country. I could use my time slot on spending your precious time, Madame Chair and fellow Ambassadors, by explaining the real circumstances of the cessation of the Black Sea Grain deal and condemning those Members, who bear the real responsibility for the deteriorating situation in the world food and fertilizers' markets. And I will be forced to do so if some delegations continue to make interventions that are inconsistent with the mandate, purpose and agenda of WTO meetings. But I much hope that you, Madame Chair, and other Chairpersons will finally use your authority to persuade those delegations to refrain from politicizing and disrupting the work of the WTO.

4.131. The Chairperson delivered the following statement:

4.132. There is one thing that I do one to take note of – the comments by Kenya as the ACP Coordinator and Jamaica on the recent co-publication by the WTO and World Bank on Trade in Services for Development. This is a comprehensive study, in which both organizations have invested significant time and resources. It is reasonable for delegations to try to make the most out of this study. I talked to the Chair of the CTS SS who brought this up that perhaps organizing a discussion along relevant themes touched upon in the report would be beneficial to Members – if she could do that in her Negotiating Group. It is incredible how congruent the topics that have been mentioned are. As all of you have said, we know what topics on substance we want to focus on because all of you have alluded to them. It is how we choose among those topics for the SOM and the questions that we pose that would be key. The more we work together and talk to each other, the more we come to recognize that we have the same priorities even though within them there may still be differences in some. But I thought today was a great discussion. I am almost two years and a half on the job, and I compared the quality of the discussion today with when I first came. There is a real difference in the atmosphere. That gives me a lot of hope. I want to commend Members for this great atmosphere and this discussion. Let me also note that it looks like LDC Graduation maybe ripe. I want to thank those who are working on it. I listened to Djibouti as LDC Coordinator, the United States and Bangladesh, among other Members. If there is work going on and we can deal with this at the GC meeting, that would be a worth celebration. Excellencies, thank you for supporting the process I laid out – although there are Members who will think more about it and come back with suggestions. Like I said, we are open. We will refine and take into account your comments. Some delegations are anxious to have a notion of subjects to be discussed to share with their Senior Officials. But I like to invite you to have patience. I do not think we are in a position to circulate something. What I will do is to share my remarks so if your Senior Officials are anxious, they can read those remarks and have an idea that it is not just an empty space. There are things that we are looking at. I will counsel us to have patience before even trying to do a preliminary agenda because that may put us in corners where we may not want to be. The period between September and October gives us one month for more preparations and discussions. All of that can feed into the

Joint Informal HODs. One more month of work will surely make some of the ideas we have more solid going forward and sharpen questions that we may put to Senior Officials on some of the topics.

4.133. I want to borrow from what Ambassador Usha Dwarka-Canabady (Mauritius) and Ambassador Maria Pagan (United States) said. A culture of not waiting for Ministers would help. If we can make decisions and take things off the table, it will leave less even for Senior Officials or Ministers to consider. We are asking for many things – transparency of meetings, avoiding clashing meetings, among others. Like what Members said, if we don't want meetings to clash, let us try to conclude some things and make decisions. That could help us tick some items off the table. We will try our best. We know that there are several delegations that are challenged because they are managing many things. We are sympathetic. But I don't think we will get it 100% perfect. I cannot promise you that. We will do the best we can. We are entering a period of multiple negotiations. So, whatever we can do for you to have back up – if you can get this from home for this period, if we can reach out to Senior Officials from the capital somehow so that they can help you, we should work on doing that. We do not have much time. I have talked to Heads of other international organizations about how to manage the clash and we are all in a dilemma. Sometimes issues arise all of a sudden and they have to call a meeting, or they have some pre-planned statutory meetings. It is not easy. So, I am asking for understanding. We will try to be as inclusive and transparent in the meetings. But I also want you on your side to tell the capital officials that you need additional help if they can during this short period of time. I do tell Ministers and Leaders when I see them that their teams are small. That is the plea I wanted because Brunei Darussalam and many other Members have raised this. We will do the best we can, but we cannot be perfect. We are on a good path on the content, process and atmosphere. Today's discussion has been helpful. We will do all the work you have indicated to make it easier for Senior Officials before they come. I hope that when we all come back from the summer, we can press some more. We will definitely have these things put down as a guide to help us all at that time.

4.134. The Trade Negotiations Committee took note of the statements.

5 EXTENDED INFORMAL HEADS OF DELEGATION MEETING

5.1. The Chairperson, speaking as Director-General, delivered the following statement:

5.2. Excellencies, let us now turn to the Extended HoDs. In the convening notice for this meeting, I indicated that I intended to provide:

- a. Updates on the Secretariat Transformation process and Strategic Vision and Focus Pillars exercises.
- b. Updates on the Civil Society and Business Advisory Groups to the Secretariat.
- c. Any other updates.

Secretariat's high-level vision and strategic pillars

5.3. I will focus today mainly on the work on vision and strategy for the Secretariat. We launched the work to develop a vision and strategy for the Secretariat at the end of March. On 10 July, I shared with Secretariat staff and with you the results of the first step of this work. This is in the form of a "Secretariat strategy house", comprising Vision and Mission Statements, strategic pillars, and enablers. Here, I would like to stress once again that this is a Vision for the Secretariat, rather than for the WTO or for its Members. The document that I shared with you synthesizes three months of hard work, including engagement with and inputs from a wide variety of stakeholders. Members' inputs were valuable, and I thank all of you who contributed to this exercise. I would particularly like to recognize the contribution of Ambassador Dacio Castillo (Honduras) in facilitating your inputs. We believe that we have achieved our objective of elaborating a concise vision statement that is inspiring, forward-looking, relevant, unifying, action-oriented, and motivating for all staff.

- a. The Secretariat vision statement is: "Build a better world for people through global cooperation and rules-based international trade".

- b. The fact that service to Members is at the heart of our activities at the Secretariat is fully reflected in our Mission Statement, which is: "The Secretariat supports the WTO Membership with integrity, impartiality, independence, and expertise, in line with the WTO agreements".
- c. The strategic pillars are high-level, long-term goals that will guide operational decisions and help the Secretariat move towards its vision. These are designed to be cross-cutting and flexible enough to be relevant for the whole range of activities of the Secretariat and all the ways in which we serve Members. The pillars are action-oriented, can endure over time, and will serve as the starting point for the elaboration and operationalization of a Secretariat strategy. The enablers are the foundations that we need to build and fortify to support everything we want to do. Much of the transformation work that we have done so far has already targeted these two areas – our people culture and our use of technology.

5.4. I hope that all Members have had the opportunity to read and reflect on our new Secretariat strategy house. I will be interested to hear your thoughts and reactions. The Director for Vision and Strategy and the Transformation Office are now moving to a new phase of work, which is to flesh out the Secretariat's strategy up to 2030. This will involve elaborating in more detail the content of the five strategic pillars and two enablers. Those will then be translated into concrete, time-bound plans. Mechanisms will also be developed to ensure coordination as well as alignment of Secretariat planning and operations with the overall strategy. This phase will require involvement and active participation not only across the Secretariat but will also benefit from regular engagement with Members. I understand that questions have been raised as to possible links between this work on strategy and vision and the 2024-2025 biennial budget proposal. I would like to clarify that this work is separate from our budget proposal at this stage. The work on vision and strategy has always been part of the planned second phase of transformation work. We intended to begin this work in late 2022, but the start was delayed until the spring of 2023. This means that we are only now beginning the detailed work on strategy, and that it is too early to link this in a concrete manner to our budget request. This will come at the next budget cycle.

Secretariat's other transformation workstreams

5.5. DDG Ellard provided an update on other transformation work at the CBFA meeting held on Tuesday. I will not repeat the contents of that report today, but I do want to give you a quick update on the ongoing digital transformation. During the last WTO Reform retreat, you heard about what is going on in "the Reform by doing", including how the Secretariat collaborates with Committees on the release of digital tools. We are continuing to push forward with our digital transformation initiatives as we can, including building governance to adjust the sequencing, scope, and prioritization of initiatives as circumstances and available budget evolve. The Global Trade Data portal was recently launched. This portal was presented to the Committee on Trade and Development, including a demonstration of the new dashboard with real-time data on international wheat shipments. It is really fascinating when you look at it – which I invite all of you to do. The Secretariat is now actively investigating how generative AI can transform the search tools we make available to you. The digital transformation work we have already done, and the lessons we have learned so far, will also feed into and enrich the development of our strategy, particularly around the Technology, Digital, Data Enabler, which is "Leverage technology to best serve Members, reinforce the Secretariat as a centre of excellence, and improve operational efficiency and user experience". More detailed information on our transformation efforts is regularly provided to the Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration, including in written status reports – the most recent one is in document WT/BFA/635 – as well as in DDG Ellard's speaking notes on transformation, which are circulated after each CBFA meeting.

Business and Civil Society Advisory Groups to the Secretariat

5.6. Turning to the Business and Civil Society Advisory Groups to the Secretariat, in my information note to you on 20 June, I shared the composition of my two Advisory Groups. I subsequently met virtually with the civil society leaders on 21 June and with the business leaders on 4 July. The discussions we had were interesting and insightful, highlighting the importance of engaging more directly with our stakeholders. Let me share some of the main themes that emerged from my exchanges with the groups.

5.7. The Civil Society Group spoke to the following issues:

- a. The role the WTO can and should play in shaping the world of tomorrow for the benefit of youth, workers, consumers, and the environment. In their view, this would necessitate a comprehensive reform of the current institutional framework.
- b. The important role that trade can and should play in improving the food security situation around the world, with a call to better understand the impact of different types of subsidies and climate change on food security. They dwelt a lot on the food security issue as something of prime importance to civil society.
- c. The need to address the nexus between trade, climate change and biodiversity and to provide a facilitating environment at WTO to discuss this.

5.8. What was interesting to me is what they raised – some of the issues that are bothering people in the world today. These include climate and food security. There were things that civil society thought we should be delivering on.

5.9. The Business Advisory Group spoke to the following issues:

- a. The need for the WTO to be in touch with the realities of people that depend on trade, and with those of business, particularly small and medium sized enterprises.
- b. The impact of digitalization and technology on trade: the ever-growing importance of services and digital economy and the need to create and support an enabling environment for digital trade to develop further, especially in developing countries. Other rapidly evolving areas were also highlighted such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) where global standards they felt should be developed. The importance of maintaining the existing moratorium on customs duties on e-commerce was also underscored.
- c. The overall need to make trade more inclusive and sustainable and to translate ambition into action on both fronts. On inclusivity, capacity building and trade finance were noted as key to MSMEs that want to trade internationally. In addition, the role of trade in achieving SDGs was underscored.

5.10. Business group members expressed concern about the dispute settlement system functioning partially, being the bedrock of stability of the system. They urged for repair, to continue to make WTO rules the underlying bedrock for the multilateral trading system. As expected, I found a lot of value in hearing the views of the civil society and business leaders and I am hopeful that at future occasions, there would be opportunity for the membership to interact with and benefit from the perspectives of these stakeholders. We are doing this transparently for you to share and hear the issues of concern that they are talking about. Those who might be interesting in participating and listening to them at some point, I would like to know, so that we can have you join some of these meetings, pose questions or hear feedback. I aim to meet virtually with both Groups again before the end of the year, to be followed by an in-person meeting at some point – either before the end of the year or beginning next year.

DDG Selection process

5.11. I also wanted to share with you, where things are with the search for a DDG to replace Anabel given the importance of the process so that we are open and transparent on what we are doing. We turn to GRULAC to provide a list of possible candidates. A list of seven candidates have been provided. I subsequently have put a panel together which was not easy. It takes a bit of time. The panel has commenced work. They had an initial meeting. We hope that within the next few weeks, they would be able to move speedily with this process. They have drawn up a road map for completing the process hopefully by August. But given the summer break, we hope it can be done. I have gone outside to get the Chair of this Committee who is Prof. Richard Baldwin who is the Professor of International Economics at the Graduate Institute. He is an expert on trade which many of you will know. I have done that because it is quite an unusual list that contains some sitting and former Ambassadors on it. It is a delicate issue to handle. We have composed the panel as follows: Ambassador Clare Kelly (New Zealand), Ambassador Muhammadou Kah (The Gambia), WTO Chief Economist – Dr. Ralph Ossa, WTO Chief of Staff – Dr. Bright Okogu and Director of the Human Resources Division of the WTO Secretariat – Ms. Alison Holmes as the Secretary to the Panel. The

panel will do its work in an open and transparent way. When they finish, they will give me a shortlist of two or three candidates depending on what they wish to do. I want everybody to know what we are doing so that there is no lack of transparency in the process from which I am standing back.

Remarks on WTO Budget

5.12. Let me also make a few remarks on the WTO Budget. As you know this past Tuesday, I presented my 2024-2025 budget request to the CBFA and spent several hours engaging with Members in a constructive dialogue. I want to thank the Chair of the CBFA, Ambassador Waldmann (Germany), for her guidance and patience. That document is available as [WT/BFA/W/643](#). I want to also thank my team, led by DDG Ellard. Those who were at the CBFA heard first-hand the discussion which I thought was constructive and I appreciate that. But many were not, and this is why I thought I should briefly address this issue today. The success of MC12, the considerable work that Members are engaged in for completion by MC13, and exigent circumstances beyond our control, including inflation, create an important and, I believe, compelling, context for this budget request. Since 2012, the Secretariat's budget has been frozen at zero nominal growth. But while our budget has remained flat in nominal terms, it has been declining significantly in real terms, taking Swiss inflation into account. In fact, in real terms, our budget has actually declined by more than CHF 10 million since 2012. In 2023 alone, we are experiencing a 5 percent decrease. In essence, what I am asking you is not really to increase our budget, but rather to adjust it for inflation accumulated over the 12 years of zero nominal growth budgeting. I am just asking you to bring us back to our 2012 budget in real terms – to make us whole – with a little extra to improve our ability to serve you, particularly with 15 additional staff posts dedicated to obtaining new technical and substantive expertise as well as a small amount to help fill the promotions backlog.

5.13. We know we must – and should – justify every bit of our request. As I said when I presented this request, we know that many of you are in similar situations. So, we are not asking lightly. We know that some of you are also facing zero nominal growth. We are demonstrating that we are doing more with less, and have cut, redeployed, and repurposed including with heating and air-conditioning. We are working actively on competency review and staff planning. But in the meantime, we also have a programme for rotating junior staff and we are looking at how to do this with senior staff, both inside and outside the organization. For example, we have MOUs with the World Bank, UNCTAD, UNEP and other organizations. We are also rotating staff to give them a different experience and get others in to also help us with different skills. We have reduced this year's request compared to what we previously asked for at the mid-term review in recognition of what I just said. Everybody is experiencing cost pressures, inflation, rise in energy cost, debt levels, currency depreciations for many of the developing countries but even some of the developed ones on exchange rate pressures. I ask you to work with us over the next few months. I realized you have many questions and I value the way you approached the budget discussions in the CBFA. We are willing to work with you to answer all your questions so we can finalize the budget by last meeting of the CBFA which is in November ready for the December GC meeting. That is a whole other piece of work that will have to be going on alongside all the other work we have. But such is life as they say. Hopefully, after MC13 we will have some respite. For our part, we will be working to provide answers to the list of topics you gave for technical discussions that we will convene. As some of you suggested, this will be more helpful to answer questions. This will begin after the summer break. Please let us know your suggestions on how we can do this. We are willing and open. I hope that after all the work, you and the capitals will see fit to approve our request to make us whole.

5.14. The representative of [India](#) delivered the following statement:

5.15. We are only a few months away from MC. This calls for optimal utilization of resources, efforts, and time. As regards the Secretariat's engagement with Civil Society and Business through the recently constituted Advisory Groups, we wish to recall that this has been a long-debated issue. The General Council had issued instructions through document [WT/L/162](#), dated 23 July 1996, outlining a cautious and a limiting approach for external such engagement considering the sensitivities involved in it in view of WTO's member driven structure. The 2005 Report of the Consultative Board to the then Director-General had accurately recognized that the primary responsibility for engaging with non-Governmental organization rests with the Members Governments themselves in their domestic constituency. This Board highlighted several concerns which continue to be relevant today. The relevant issues are:

- a. undermining of Member-driven character.
- b. explicit objectives, the confines, and the gain and risk assessment for such engagements;
- c. rights, responsibilities, and accountability of participants.
- d. issues of concentrated competence, financial capacities, and interest of such entities.
- e. non-representative and skewed selection and participation.
- f. trade policy competency gaps in participants.
- g. marginalization of developing countries, and,
- h. resource application issues.

5.16. Our immediate concerns in this regard are:

- a. lack of transparency in the process and criteria of selection of entities, both at inter and intra region.
- b. ensuring that the agenda of certain members may not get pushed up considering that we have had a proposal from a member for a similar forum for such external engagements.
- c. Need for formal communication with members on the discussions held in these forums, to prevent distorted reporting in media and elsewhere.

5.17. We may recall here that para 12 of the MC12 Outcome Document also comes with caveats on engagement with relevant stakeholders, prescribing that engagement with external stakeholders who have responsibilities related to those of the WTO be done in accordance with the rules and principles of the WTO. So, there is a caveat hereto. Therefore, we are of the view that the issue of secretariat's external engagements requires a fresh round of transparent and inclusive discussions, for mandate and guidelines, as the General Council considers appropriate. As regards the vision and mission statement of the secretariat, considering the effort needed for Secretariat vision and focus pillar exercise, it may be appropriate to reflect upon whether discussions on it is deferred to post MC. Also, we would like to suggest that vision statement and strategic pillars must remain in the confines of the mandated for the secretariat in the Marrakesh Agreement.

5.18. The Director-General recalled that she also had a discussion with Minister Goyal (India) about a few days ago. The Civil Society and Business Advisory Groups was not a new idea. One of her predecessors had also established one. This issue was also discussed at the General Council. Some Members had expressed great support for the idea of engaging with other stakeholders. Some did not – including India. As a result, the idea of Civil Society and Business Advisory to the WTO as an organization – had been abandoned precisely for the reasons India said that it was up to Members to deal with civil society if they so wanted. Therefore, she reiterated that these Advisory Groups were for the Secretariat. There was nothing in the rules that stopped the Director-General from getting advice from civil society and business – and interacting with them. There was also nothing that stopped her from sharing that advice with WTO Members. This was not an advisory group for the WTO. She was careful in trying to shape it so that it was for the Secretariat and not the organization. However, whatever business and civil society would say to her could be interesting and useful for Members to hear. If that was not the case, she would stop briefing Members on what civil society and business were saying. But if she could not hear from them, she would not be doing her job well. It was business that traded. It was civil society that represented ordinary people. Business wanted the WTO to be able to deal with people. On transparency, she had announced at the TNC that she was going to put up the Advisory Groups. She had selected the groups to be representative. There was nothing hidden about it. The information was circulated to all Members. Lack of transparency had become a weapon in this WTO. Members should not use it carelessly. Establishing the Advisory Groups had been an open process. She had shared this idea to Members and had asked for their comments. Since she had not gotten any, she had gone with what she had. In any case, she remained open to listening to any other input or guidance that would make the Advisory Groups to the Secretariat work better.

5.19. The representative of the United States delivered the following statement:

5.20. We welcome the transparency that the Director-General provided and the fact that you had circulated some time ago the list of names – to see who is there. We would welcome continued transparency in your engagements and your offer to have Members participate in conversations. Stakeholder engagement, which was mentioned earlier by Costa Rica and Norway, is an issue that we have also raised in the past and which we are interested in. When we were thinking about this some time ago, we looked at those 1996 guidelines – and I will say that they are from 1996. From our perspective, it is something that we would certainly be interested in looking at and revising. We talk about trying to be credible and address different issues. For us to do this, we would need to engage with the people who are out there who feel the repercussions of the things that we negotiate here. We should be hearing from them. To be clear, we are not saying that we will have stakeholders in the room while we are negotiating. Rather, it is just about being able to engage with them – like what we have been doing with some good events that we have had in the recent past where we can listen to the voices from the field. These are the people who can tell us whether what we are doing here is working or not working for them.

5.21. The representative of Egypt delivered the following statement:

5.22. With respect to the budget, I wonder if you could share with us the sort of flexibilities Members could have to pay their contribution for the budget. This is something critical that we want to consider. Definitely, the flexibilities that we might have could really help.

5.23. The Director-General said that she was thinking of this issue. Egypt was not the only one that had raised it with her. But she wanted to wait until there was clarity on whether the Membership supported her proposal. If that happened to be the case, the next step would be to discuss modalities.

5.24. The representative of the European Union delivered the following statement:

5.25. We have also been doing work to look at the question of external stakeholders. Our view is also that the guidelines of 1996 no longer reflect the way in which organizations like the WTO which depend on technical expertise often can function best. We would also invite a discussion on how we can increase external participation in the organization without those experts participating in the negotiations themselves. If we compare this organization with any international organization in this city, the judgment would be that we are significantly the most closed. But I also think that the argument that government representatives already include the knowledge of an external stakeholder because it has gone through their national processes is no longer accurate today if you think about international issues and the expertise that foundations or issue-specific NGOs can bring – which enriches discussions in the organization. I would like also to make a plea to have that discussion. I accept that it would be an incremental process. We are looking more to evolution rather than something that is radical. But it would benefit the quality of the debate here if we can also count on the inputs from external stakeholders.

5.26. The Director-General thanked those who had taken the floor including India for sparking the debate. She hoped they could talk further on the matter. She likewise heard what the United States and the European Union had to say on stakeholder engagement. She thanked all Members for contributing to that day's meeting. She noted that it had been a productive day.
