

MAINSTREAMING INTO THE WTO WORK THE TRADE-RELATED ELEMENTS OF THE LDC III PROGRAMME OF ACTION

Communication from Zambia, on behalf of LDCs

The following communication was received from the Permanent Mission of Zambia (on behalf of LDCs) on 20 December 2002 with the request that it be circulated to Members and Observers of the Sub-Committee on Least-Developed Countries.

I. BACKGROUND

1. In accordance with paragraph 5(d) and 13 of the Work Programme, the Sub-Committee shall consider possible means of implementing the systemic issue of mainstreaming into the WTO's work the trade related elements of the LDC-III Programme of Action, as relevant to the WTO's mandate, and monitor, review and report annually to the Committee on Trade and Development.

2. As they stand now, the trade related elements of the LDC III Programme of Action are not binding commitments on WTO Members and hence lack predictability. One of the key principles or pillars of the WTO is binding commitments. It was in the light of this conviction that Ministers at Doha urged Members to take into account in WTO's work the trade related elements of the Brussels Programme of Action (para 42 of the DMD).

II. OBJECTIVE

3. The Ministers' intention was to make sure that commitments made in the Programme of Action are translated into the WTO rules.

4. Therefore, the objective envisaged in the Sub-Committee Work Program to mainstream the trade related elements of the Programme of Action should be seen to be consistent with this Doha objective.

5. The final objective of this exercise should be to transform the trade related elements of the Programme of Action into an integral and permanent part of the WTO rules and disciplines as binding contractual obligations subject to the WTO Dispute Settlement procedures which is another important principle of the WTO. This is the only way that "Commitment 5: Enhancing the role of trade in development" can translate into concrete and tangible actions to benefit LDCs.

III. COVERAGE

6. With regard to the coverage of this exercise, it is mainly the "Commitment 5: Enhancing the role of trade in development" of the Brussels Programme of Action, which sets general and specific

objectives across issues under the WTO's competence, including in such areas as: S&D treatment, market access, accessions to the WTO, standard-setting and quality control, commodities, regional trading arrangements, services and technical assistance, including Integrated Framework (IF).

IV. MODALITIES OF IMPLEMENTATION

7. In this context, the following means or modalities could be foreseen:

- (i) In its annual report to the CTD, the Sub-Committee, after assessing the state of implementation of the objectives under the Commitment 5 of the Brussels Programme of Action, shall make recommendations to the General Council with regard to specific issues to be addressed in the relevant negotiating bodies under the Doha Work Programme. The CTD shall submit these recommendations to the General Council, as appropriate.
 - (ii) The General Council, in view of recommendations of the CTD, shall provide further guidance to the negotiating bodies under the Doha Work Programme.
 - (iii) Issues identified by the General Council for incorporation into the Doha Work Programme shall be treated as part of a single undertaking in the meaning of paragraph 47 of the Doha Ministerial Declaration.
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