



GENERAL COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT (2016)

The present report has been prepared in pursuance of the Procedures for an Annual Overview of WTO Activities and for Reporting under the WTO (WT/L/105).

Since its previous annual report¹, the General Council has held five meetings, on 24 February, 12 May, 27 July, 3 October, and 7 December 2016. The minutes of these meetings, which remain in the record of the General Council's work, are contained in documents WT/GC/M/161, WT/GC/M/162, WT/GC/M/163, WT/GC/M/164 and WT/GC/M/165².

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¹ The annual report of the General Council for 2015 was circulated in WT/GC/178 and WT/GC/178/Corr.1.

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1 TRADE NEGOTIATIONS COMMITTEE – REPORTS (WT/GC/M/161; WT/GC/M/162; WT/GC/M/163; WT/GC/M/164 AND WT/GC/M/165)	

1.1. Ministers at Doha established a Trade Negotiations Committee under the authority of the General Council to supervise the overall conduct of the negotiations (WT/MIN(01)/DEC/1). In accordance with the Principles and Practices endorsed by the Trade Negotiations Committee at its first meeting in 2002 (TN/C/M/1), the TNC reports to each regular meeting of the General Council.

1.2. At the General Council meetings in February, May, July, October, and December, the Director-General reported on each occasion on relevant activities since his previous report to the General Council including on Informal Heads of Delegation Meetings he convened on the matter.³

1.3. At the February meeting, the representatives of Peru; Fiji (Pacific Group); Chile; the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Arab Group); China; Nigeria; Chinese Taipei (Article XII Members); the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela; Lao PDR (ASEAN); Ecuador; Turkey; Nepal; Indonesia (G-33); the Republic of Korea; Paraguay; Burkina Faso; Cameroon; Morocco (African Group); Benin (LDCs); Zimbabwe; Jamaica and Gabon spoke⁴. The General Council took note of the Director-General's report and of the statements.

1.4. At the May meeting, the representatives of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Arab Group); the Plurinational State of Bolivia; Benin (LDCs); Cameroon; Uganda; Nigeria; Rwanda (ACP); the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela; Ecuador; Kenya; Cuba; Mali (C-4); Qatar; Nepal; Turkey; Pakistan; Tunisia; Chile; Morocco (African Group); Australia (also on behalf of New Zealand); Sierra Leone; Lesotho and Tanzania spoke⁵. The General Council took note of the Director-General's report and of the statements.

1.5. At the July meeting, the representatives of Turkey; Ukraine; Mexico; the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Arab Group); Malaysia (ASEAN); the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela; Uganda; Nepal; Colombia; Chile; China; Barbados; Liberia and Brazil spoke⁶. The General Council took note of the Director-General's report and of the statements.

1.6. At the October meeting, the representatives of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Arab Group); Benin (LDCs); the Dominican Republic (IGDC) and Nepal spoke⁷. The General Council took note of the Director-General's report and of the statements.

1.7. At the December meeting, the representatives of Morocco (African Group); Uganda and Fiji (also on behalf of the Pacific Group) spoke⁸. The General Council took note of the Director-General's report and of the statements.

³ The Director-General's reports at the General Council meeting and at the relevant Informal Meetings at the level of Heads of Delegation were subsequently circulated as JOB/GC/91, JOB/GC/92, JOB/GC/102, JOB/GC/105, and JOB/GC/111 respectively.

⁴ At their request, the statements delivered at the 10 February Informal Meeting at the level of Heads of Delegation by the following delegations were incorporated in the minutes of the February meeting in WT/GC/M/161: Argentina; Bangladesh (for LDC Group – requested by Benin); Plurinational State of Bolivia; Brazil; Cuba; Guatemala (SVEs); India; Indonesia; Japan; Kenya; Mexico; Pakistan; Rwanda; South Africa; Uganda; United States and Uruguay.

⁵ At their request, the statements delivered at the 9 May Informal Meeting at the level of Heads of Delegation by the following delegations were incorporated in the minutes of the May meeting in WT/GC/M/162: Brazil; Canada; China; European Union; India; Indonesia; Japan; Mexico; Paraguay; South Africa; Chinese Taipei and Uruguay.

⁶ At their request, the statements delivered at the 25 July Informal Meeting at the level of Heads of Delegation by the following delegations were incorporated in the minutes of the July meeting in WT/GC/M/163: Argentina; Bangladesh; Benin (LDCs); Plurinational State of Bolivia; Brazil; China; Colombia; Costa Rica; Cuba; Ecuador; European Union; Guatemala (SVEs); Hong Kong, China; India; Indonesia; Japan; Republic of Korea; Liberia; Mali (C-4); Montenegro; New Zealand; Norway; Pakistan; Paraguay; Peru; Russian Federation; Rwanda (ACP); Singapore; South Africa; Switzerland; Chinese Taipei (Article XII Members); United States and Uruguay.

⁷ At their request, the statements delivered at the 30 September Informal Meeting at the level of Heads of Delegation by the following delegations were incorporated in the minutes of the October meeting in WT/GC/M/164: Argentina; Plurinational State of Bolivia; Brazil; Chile; Colombia; Costa Rica; Cuba; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; European Union; Indonesia (G-33); Japan; Republic of Korea; Lesotho; Mali (C-4); Morocco (African Group); New Zealand; Nigeria; Norway; Pakistan; Peru; Russian Federation; Rwanda (ACP); Senegal; South Africa; Chinese Taipei (Article XII Members); Tanzania; Tunisia; Uganda; Ukraine; United States and Uruguay.

⁸ The statements delivered at the 1 and 5 December Informal Meeting at the level of Heads of Delegation by the following delegations are to be incorporated in the minutes of the December meeting in WT/GC/M/165: Norway; Chad (LDCs); Lao PDR (ASEAN); Argentina; Egypt; Japan; Ecuador; Chile; New Zealand; Rwanda (ACP); India; Republic of Korea; Uruguay; Australia; European Union; Indonesia (also on behalf of the G-33); United States; China; Singapore; Colombia; Pakistan; South Africa; Dominican Republic; Russian Federation; Costa Rica; Hong Kong, China; Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Arab Group); Switzerland;

2 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BALI AND NAIROBI OUTCOMES – STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN (WT/GC/M/161; WT/GC/M/162; WT/GC/M/163; WT/GC/M/164 AND WT/GC/M/165)

2.1. Since July 2014, the item on implementation of the Bali outcomes has been included on the General Council's agenda at the request of the Chairman, to provide an update on the work taking place in the regular bodies which were directly working on the various Bali Decisions. After the Tenth Ministerial Conference, reports on the implementation of the Nairobi outcomes were also provided under this item.

2.2. At the General Council meetings in February, May, July, October, and December, the Chairman reported on the work taking place in WTO regular bodies to fulfil the Bali and Nairobi Ministerial mandates.⁹

2.3. At the February meeting, the representative of Sierra Leone spoke. The General Council took note of the Chairman's report and of the statement.

2.4. At the May meeting, the representatives of the Republic of Moldova; Brazil; Montenegro; Paraguay; the United States; Benin (LDCs); New Zealand (also on behalf of Australia); Canada; Argentina; Japan and the European Union spoke. The General Council took note of the Chairman's report and of the statements.

2.5. At the July meeting, the representatives of Benin (LDCs), Tanzania, Uganda and the Russian Federation spoke. The General Council took note of the Chairman's report and of the statements.

2.6. At the October meeting, the Director-General and the representative of Benin (LDCs) spoke. The General Council took note of the Chairman's report and of the statements.

2.7. At the December meeting, the representatives of Benin (LDCs) and Uganda spoke. The General Council took note of the Chairman's report and of the statements.

3 WORK PROGRAMME ON ELECTRONIC COMMERCE – REVIEW OF PROGRESS (WT/GC/M/163 AND WT/GC/M/165)

3.1. In line with the Declaration on Global Electronic Commerce adopted by Ministers at the second session of the Ministerial Conference (WT/MIN(98)/DEC/2), in September 1998, the General Council adopted a Work Programme on Electronic Commerce (WT/L/274). At MC10, Ministers adopted a Decision on the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce (WT/MIN(15)/42 – WT/L/977) which instructed the General Council to hold periodic reviews in its sessions of July and December 2016 and July 2017 based on the reports that could be submitted by the WTO bodies entrusted with the implementation of the Work Programme.

3.2. At the July meeting, Ambassador Suescum (Panama), as the Friend of the Chair, provided an overview of the work taking place in the work programme on e-commerce. His report was subsequently circulated in WT/GC/W/721. The Chairman also drew attention to the reports submitted by the Chairs of the CTS (S/C/49) and the CTG (G/C/57) and welcomed several submissions from a number of delegations in this area. The representatives of the United States; Zimbabwe; Chile; Mexico; the European Union; Japan; the Republic of Korea; the Russian Federation; Pakistan; and Brazil spoke¹⁰. The General Council took note of the reports by the Chairpersons of the Goods Council in G/C/57 and the Services Council in S/C/49, of Ambassador Suescum's report, and of the statements.

3.3. At the December meeting, the Chairman provided an overview of the work taking place in the work programme on e-commerce. His report was subsequently circulated in WT/GC/W/728. The Chairman also drew attention to the reports submitted by the Chairs of the CTS (S/C/51) and the

Senegal; Mexico; Chinese Taipei (Article XII Members); Plurinational State of Bolivia; Tunisia; Brazil; Zimbabwe; Nepal; Paraguay; Bangladesh; Montenegro; Tanzania and Nigeria.

⁹ The Chairman's statements were subsequently circulated as JOB/GC/90, JOB/GC/93, JOB/GC/103, JOB/GC/106 and JOB/GC/112 respectively.

¹⁰ At Ukraine's request made to the Chairman at the meeting, its statement under this item was incorporated in the minutes of the July meeting and can be found in Annex 3 of WT/GC/M/163.

CTG (G/C/58). The representatives of Costa Rica; China; the European Union; the United States; Benin (LDCs); Japan; Pakistan; Paraguay; Lao PDR (ASEAN); Peru; the Republic of Korea; Uganda; Norway; Canada; Nigeria; Chile; Hong Kong, China; Switzerland; India; Australia; Brazil; Mexico; Ecuador; Singapore; El Salvador; Colombia; Uruguay and the Plurinational State of Bolivia spoke. The General Council took note of the reports by the Chairpersons of the Goods Council in G/C/58 and the Services Council in S/C/51, of the Chairman's report, and of the statements.

4 WORK PROGRAMME ON SMALL ECONOMIES – REPORTS (WT/GC/M/161; WT/GC/M/162; WT/GC/M/163; WT/GC/M/164 AND WT/GC/M/165)

4.1. In 2002, the General Council took note of a framework and procedures for the conduct of the Work Programme on Small Economies, which had been agreed by Ministers at Doha (WT/MIN(01)/DEC/1, paragraph 35), under which this Work Programme would be a standing item on the General Council's agenda and which also provided that the Committee on Trade and Development (CTD) would report regularly to the General Council on the progress of work in its Dedicated Sessions on this subject. In December 2015, Ministers at MC10 adopted the Decision on the Work Programme on Small Economies (WT/MIN(15)/40 – WT/L/975) which reaffirmed their commitment to the Work Programme and instructed the CTD to continue its work in Dedicated Sessions under the overall responsibility of the General Council.

4.2. At the February meeting, the CTD Chairman referred to the Nairobi Decision on the Work Programme on Small Economies and said that the CTD-DS would focus on the challenges small economies faced in the textiles and apparel sector, and in reducing trade costs, particularly in the area of trade facilitation, and on small economies' participation in services value chains. The representatives of Guatemala (SVEs) and the United States spoke. The General Council took note of the report and of the statements.

4.3. At the May meeting, the CTD Chairman reported that discussions in the CTD-DS focused on accessing global value chains in the textiles and clothing sector. In fulfilling its Nairobi mandate, work on global value chains continued, and work on reducing trade costs would begin at its next meeting in July. The representatives of Guatemala (SVEs) and the United States spoke. The General Council took note of the report and of the statements.

4.4. At the July meeting, the CTD Chairman reported that discussions in the CTD-DS focused on accessing global value chains in the tourism sector. In fulfilling its Nairobi mandate, preliminary work began with the Dedicated Session set to further advance its work at its next meeting in November. The representative of Honduras (SVEs) spoke. The General Council took note of the report and of the statement.

4.5. At the October meeting, the CTD Chairman reported that the CTD-DS was preparing for its next Dedicated Session which would focus on "Information Technology" and "Business Process Outsourcing". In fulfilling its Nairobi mandate, he reiterated that preliminary work began with the CTD-DS set to further advance its work in November. The representative of Guatemala (SVEs) spoke. The General Council took note of the report and of the statement.

4.6. At the December meeting, the CTD Chairman reported on the Dedicated Session held on 4 November, where discussions had focused on IT and BPO services and logistics and maritime transport services. In relation to the Nairobi mandate, Members had agreed to a revised proposal introduced by Guatemala (SVEs) in WT/COMTD/SE/W/33/Rev.1. The representative of Honduras (SVEs) spoke. The General Council took note of the report and of the statement.

5 AID FOR TRADE – REPORT (WT/GC/M/161)

5.1. At the February meeting, the CTD Chairperson introduced the Aid-for-Trade Work Programme for 2016-2017 in document WT/COMTD/AFT/W/60 with the organizing theme of "Promoting Connectivity". The work programme would further deepen analysis of the supply-side capacity and trade-related infrastructure constraints faced by developing countries. The representative of the United States spoke. The General Council took note of the new Aid for Trade Work Programme, of the statement of the Chairperson of the CTD and of the other statement.

6 THE DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE ASPECTS OF COTTON – STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL (WT/GC/M/165)

6.1. In Paragraph 1.b of the 1 August 2004 Decision on the Doha Work Programme (WT/L/579), the General Council, inter alia, took note of the bilateral, multilateral, and regional efforts to make progress on the development assistance aspects of the Cotton Initiative, and instructed the Secretariat to continue to work with the development community and to provide the Council with periodic reports on relevant developments. The Council also instructed the Director-General to consult with relevant international organizations, including the Bretton Woods Institutions, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Trade Centre, to direct effectively existing programmes and any additional resources towards development of the economies where cotton had vital importance. The Bali and Nairobi Decisions reaffirmed this mandate, and invited the Director-General to continue to provide periodic reports.

6.2. At the December meeting, Deputy Director-General Shark, on behalf of the Director-General, reported on the development assistance aspects of cotton and noted the acceleration in the implementation of projects and programmes in the area. He commended delegations for their constructive engagement in the Consultative Framework, highlighted contributions on the South-South Cooperation platform and urged Members to continue to strengthen its development assistance for the LDCs' cotton sector. The representative of Benin (LDCs) spoke. The General Council took note of the Deputy Director-General's statement, on behalf of the Director-General, and of the statement.

7 REVIEW UNDER PARAGRAPH 8 OF THE DECISION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PARAGRAPH 6 OF THE DOHA DECLARATION ON THE TRIPS AGREEMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH – REPORT OF THE COUNCIL FOR TRIPS (WT/GC/M/165)

7.1. In August 2003, the General Council adopted a Decision on the Implementation of Paragraph 6 of the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health. Paragraph 8 of that Decision provided that the TRIPS Council should review annually the functioning of the system set out in the Decision with a view to ensuring its effective operation, and should annually report on its operation to the General Council.

7.2. At the December meeting, the Chairman of the TRIPS Council introduced the report of that Council (IP/C/76) on its annual review of the Decision on the Implementation of Paragraph 6 of the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health. The report also provided an update on the status of acceptances of the Protocol Amending the TRIPS Agreement. The Director-General and the representatives of Canada and Morocco (African Group) spoke. The General Council took note of the report of the TRIPS Council and of the statements.

8 ACCESSION MATTERS

8.1 WTO Accessions – Statement by Morocco on behalf of the African Group (WT/GC/M/163)

8.1. At the July meeting, the representative of Morocco, on behalf of the African Group, made a statement on WTO accession issues calling upon Members to help expedite the accession process and underlining the necessity of intensifying the provision of technical assistance. The representatives of Oman (also on behalf of the ACP Group, Brazil, Cuba, the C-4, Japan, Oman, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Viet Nam); Benin (LDCs); Chinese Taipei; India; the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Arab Group); Chad; Qatar; the Republic of Korea; Yemen; China; the Dominican Republic (IGDC); Bangladesh; Indonesia; the Russian Federation and the European Union, and H.E. Dr Kamal Hassan Ali, Minister of International Cooperation of the Republic of Sudan (as an Observer) spoke¹¹. The Chairman informed Members that following consultations, there was a broad consensus on Mr Ryosuke Kuwawa (DPR of Japan) to serve as Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Sudan. The General Council took note of the statements.

¹¹ At Japan's request made to the Chairman at the meeting, its statement under this item was incorporated in the minutes of the July meeting and can be found in Annex 4 of WT/GC/M/163.

8.2 Algeria (WT/GC/M/164)

8.2. At the October meeting, the Chairman announced consensus on the appointment of Ambassador Gustavo Vanerio (Uruguay) as Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Algeria. The representatives of Uruguay and Algeria (Observer) spoke. The General Council took note of the statements.

8.3 Working Party on the Accession of the Islamic Republic of Iran – Statement by Oman (WT/GC/M/162)

8.3. At the May meeting, the representative of Oman, on behalf of Armenia, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, China, Cuba, India, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Oman, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uruguay, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Zimbabwe, made a statement on the working party process on the Accession of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The representatives of Japan; the European Union; the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; Switzerland; Mexico; Qatar; Nigeria; China; Bahrain; Yemen; Sri Lanka; Montenegro; New Zealand; Norway; the Republic of Korea; the United Arab Emirates; Colombia; the State of Kuwait; Lesotho; Jordan; Benin and Uganda spoke. The General Council took note of the statements.

8.4 Somalia and Timor-Leste (WT/GC/M/165)

8.4. At the December meeting, the Chairman drew the Council's attention to the communications from the Federal Republic of Somalia (WT/ACC/SOM/1) and from the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (WT/ACC/TLS/1) requesting accession to the WTO Agreement pursuant to Article XII. He proposed that the General Council agree to establish the respective Working Parties with standard terms of reference and membership, which he read out. The General Council so agreed.

8.5. The Director-General, H.E. Faduma Abdullahi Mohamud, Permanent Representative of Somalia (as an Observer), H.E. Estanislau Aleixo da Silva, Minister of Economic Affairs and of Agriculture and Fisheries of Timor-Leste (as an Observer) and the representatives of Morocco (African Group); the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Arab Group); Lao PDR (ASEAN); Benin (LDCs); Kenya; Chinese Taipei (Article XII Members); Turkey; China; the United States; Japan; Yemen; Brazil; Tanzania; the Republic of Korea; Norway; Cambodia; Australia; New Zealand; India; the European Union; Canada; Fiji (Pacific Group); Cape Verde; the Russian Federation; Uganda and Sudan (as an Observer) spoke. The General Council took note of the statements.

8.5 Belarus (WT/GC/M/165)

8.6. At the December meeting, the Chairman informed Members that, following consultations and in keeping with usual WTO practice, it had been agreed that Ambassador Kemal Madenoğlu (Turkey) would be Chairman of the Working Party on the Accession of Belarus. The representatives of Turkey and Belarus (as an Observer) spoke. The General Council took note of the statements.

8.6 2016 Annual Report by the Director-General (WT/GC/M/165)

8.7. At the December meeting, Deputy Director-General Shark, on behalf of the Director-General, introduced the 2016 Annual Report on WTO Accessions (WT/ACC/28). The representatives of the European Union; Yemen; Oman; Belarus (as an Observer) and Iran (as an Observer) spoke. The General Council took note of the Director-General's report and of the statements.

9 PROCEDURE FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF HS 2017 CHANGES TO SCHEDULES OF CONCESSIONS USING THE TARIFF SCHEDULES (CTS) DATABASE

9.1. At the December meeting, the General Council adopted the draft decision contained in G/C/W/732. The decision was subsequently circulated in WT/L/995.

10 WAIVERS¹²

10.1 United States – Former Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands – Statement by the Chairman of the Council for Trade in Goods (WT/GC/M/163)

10.1. At the July meeting, the Chairman, on behalf of the Goods Council Chair, in accordance with Article IX:3 of the WTO Agreement, reported that the Council for Trade in Goods had not completed the consideration of the United States' request on the extension of the waiver on the Former Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (G/C/W/721). The General Council agreed to allow the Goods Council to continue to consider this request.

10.2 Introduction of Harmonized System 2002, 2007, 2012 and 2017 Changes into WTO Schedules of Tariff Concessions – Draft Decision (WT/GC/M/165)

10.2. At the December meeting, the General Council considered four draft waiver decisions contained in G/C/W/728, G/C/W/729, G/C/W/730/Rev.1 and G/C/W/733/Rev.1 which concerned the Introduction of Harmonized System 2002, 2007, 2012 and 2017 changes into WTO Schedules of Tariff Concessions, respectively. The Chairman of the Council for Trade in Goods reported on the consideration of this matter by that Council. The General Council took note of the report and, in accordance with the Decision-Making Procedures under Articles IX and XII of the WTO Agreement agreed in November 1995 (WT/L/93), adopted the four draft decisions (WT/L/996, WT/L/997, WT/L/998 and WT/L/999).

10.3 United States – Former Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands – Extension of Waiver – Draft Decision (WT/GC/M/165)

10.4 United States – Trade Preferences granted to Nepal – Draft Decision (WT/GC/M/165)

10.5 European Union – Application of Autonomous Preferential Treatment to the Western Balkans – Extension of Waiver – Draft Decision (WT/GC/M/165)

10.6 Cuba – Article XV:6 of GATT 1994 – Extension of Waiver (WT/GC/M/165)

10.3. At the December meeting, the General Council considered the four draft waiver decisions contained in documents G/C/W/721, G/C/W/724, G/C/W/731 and G/C/W/734. The Chairman of the Council for Trade in Goods reported on consideration of this matter by that Council. The representatives of Montenegro; Nepal and Fiji (Pacific Group) spoke. The General Council took note of the report and of the statements, and in accordance with the Decision-Making Procedures under Articles IX and XII of the WTO Agreement agreed in November 1995 (WT/L/93), adopted the four draft decisions (WT/L/1000, WT/L/1001, WT/L/1002 and WT/L/1003).

10.7 Review of Waivers Pursuant to Article IX:4 of the WTO Agreement (WT/GC/M/163 and WT/GC/M/165)

10.4. Under Article IX:4 of the WTO Agreement, "[a]ny waiver granted for a period of more than one year shall be reviewed by the Ministerial Conference not later than one year after it is granted, and thereafter annually until the waiver terminates."

10.5. At the July meeting, the General Council considered the following waivers for review under Article IX:4:

- i. Canada – CARIBCAN, granted on 28 July 2015 until 31 December 2023 (WT/L/958, WT/L/987)
- ii. Preferential Treatment for Least-Developed Countries, granted on 27 May 2009 until 30 June 2019 (WT/L/759)

¹² A list of waivers granted in 2016 as well as those previously granted and still in force in 2016 is contained in WT/GC/W/729. Additionally, a list of waivers granted by the General Council and by the Ministerial Conference between 1995 and 2015 can be found in WT/GC/W/718.

- iii. United States – Former Territory of the Pacific Islands, granted on 27 July 2007 until 31 December 2016 (WT/L/694, WT/L/990 and WT/L/990/Corr.1)
- iv. United States – Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act, granted on 5 May 2015 until 31 December 2019 (WT/L/950, WT/L/988)
- v. Philippines – Special Treatment for Rice, granted on 24 July 2014 until 30 June 2017 (WT/L/932)

10.6. In doing so, the General Council considered reports on implementation of the respective waivers in documents WT/L/987, WT/L/988, WT/L/990 and WT/L/990/Corr.1. The representatives of Jamaica, Benin (LDCs) and Senegal spoke. The General Council took note of the reports, and of the statements, and reverted to the review of multi-year waivers under Article IX.4 of the WTO Agreement at its last regular meeting in 2016.

10.7. At the December meeting, the General Council considered the following waivers for review under Article IX:4:

- i. Preferential treatment to services and service suppliers of least-developed countries, granted on 17 December 2011 until 31 December 2030 (WT/L/847, WT/L/982)
- ii. Kimberley process certification scheme for rough diamonds, granted on 12 December 2012 until 31 December 2018 (WT/L/876)
- iii. European Union – Application of autonomous preferential treatment to the West Balkans, granted on 30 November 2011 until 31 December 2016 (WT/L/836, WT/L/993)
- iv. Cuba – Article XV:6 of GATT 1994, extension of waiver, granted on 14 February 2012 until 31 December 2016 (WT/L/850, WT/L/994)

10.8. In doing so, the General Council considered reports on implementation of the respective waivers in documents WT/L/993 and WT/L/994. The General Council took note of the reports.

11 ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE – DATE AND VENUE (WT/GC/M/162; WT/GC/M/163; WT/GC/M/164 AND WT/GC/M/165)

11.1. Article IV of the Marrakesh Agreement provided that "*There shall be a Ministerial Conference of representatives of all Members, which shall meet at least once every two years.*" In Nairobi, under item 3 of the Agenda, Ministers instructed the General Council to hold consultations regarding the date and venue of the Eleventh Session of the Ministerial Conference – MC11.

11.2. At the May meeting, the Chairman announced that consultations would start shortly, with a view to Members taking a decision collectively on the date and venue of the next Ministerial Conference at the July General Council meeting. The General Council took note of the statement.

11.3. At the July meeting, the Chairman drew Members' attention to Argentina's offer to host MC11 circulated in document WT/GC/180. Argentina introduced its communication in this regard. The Chairman and the Director-General thanked Argentina for its offer. The Chairman said he would continue his consultations on this matter immediately after the summer break. The General Council took note of the statements.

11.4. The Chairman then drew Members' attention to Uruguay's offer to host MC11 circulated in document WT/GC/181. Uruguay introduced its communication in this regard. The Chairman and the Director-General thanked Uruguay for its offer. The Chairman reiterated that he would continue his consultations after the summer break. The General Council took note of the statements.

11.5. At the October meeting, the Chairman reported that during the consultations the representatives of the two Members offering to host the Conference – Argentina and Uruguay – had been working in close contact. As a result of their excellent cooperation, Uruguay had

announced at the 30 September Informal HODs meeting that its Government had decided to withdraw the offer to host MC11 in favour of Argentina. Given those developments, and in light of the high level of support for Argentina's candidature that the Chairman had been detecting during his consultations, the General Council agreed that the Eleventh Session of the Ministerial Conference would be hosted by Argentina, in Buenos Aires. The Director-General and the representative of Argentina spoke. The General Council took note of the statements.

11.6. At the December meeting, the General Council agreed that the Eleventh Session of the Ministerial Conference would take place on 11-14 December 2017.

12 ENHANCING THE PARTICIPATION OF MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMES) IN REGIONAL AND GLOBAL MARKETS – STATEMENTS BY THE PHILIPPINES (WT/GC/M/161; WT/GC/M/163 AND WT/GC/M/164)

12.1. At the February meeting, the representative of the Philippines, on behalf of the Philippines, Brunei Darussalam, Lao PDR, Malaysia and Singapore, presented a road map for 2016 to address the matter of Fostering the Participation of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Regional and Global Markets. The representatives of Turkey; the Russian Federation; New Zealand; the United States; Japan; India; the Republic of Korea; Switzerland; Pakistan; Benin (LDCs); Mexico; the European Union; Nigeria; Canada; Paraguay; Brazil; Colombia; Tanzania and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela spoke. The General Council took note of the statements.

12.2. At the July meeting, the representative of the Philippines, also on behalf of Brunei Darussalam, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, made a statement on the MSME seminar, the summary of which could be found in JOB/GC/95. The Director-General and the representative of Chinese Taipei spoke. The General Council took note of the statements.

12.3. At the October meeting, the representative of the Philippines made a statement on the MSMEs session at the 15th WTO Public Forum. The Philippines would come out with a summary of the Public Forum session and together with the co-sponsors, Brunei Darussalam, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, they would engage Members on how to pursue the initiative further. The General Council took note of the statement.

13 TRADE RESTRICTIONS BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S TRADE MEASURES AFFECTING UKRAINIAN TRANSIT OF PRODUCTS

13.1 Communication from Ukraine (WT/GC/M/161)

13.1. At the February meeting, the representative of Ukraine made a statement on the Trade Restrictions by the Russian Federation following its communication to the Goods Council in document G/C/W/720. The representatives of the Russian Federation; Turkey; the European Union; the United States and Canada spoke. The General Council took note of the statements.

13.2 Statement by Ukraine (WT/GC/M/163)

13.2. At the July meeting, the representative of Ukraine made a statement on the Russian Federation's trade measures affecting Ukrainian transit of products. The representatives of the United States; the European Union; Japan; Canada; Georgia; Australia; the Republic of Korea; Norway and the Russian Federation spoke. The General Council took note of the statements.

14 PROHIBITION OF TRANSPORTATION OF TRANSIT GOODS ON RUSSIAN ROAD TRANSPORT BY UKRAINE – STATEMENT BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION (WT/GC/M/161)

14.1. At the February meeting, the representative of the Russian Federation made a statement on Ukraine's prohibition of transportation of transit goods by Russian road transport. The representatives of Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova spoke. The General Council took note of the statements.

15 COMMITTEE ON BUDGET, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

15.1 Reports and Recommendations (WT/GC/M/162; WT/GC/M/163; WT/GC/M/164; and WT/GC/M/165)

15.1. At the May meeting, the General Council considered reports by the Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration on its meetings in March (WT/BFA/153) and April (WT/BFA/154). The General Council took note of the statement of the Chairperson of the Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration, approved the Budget Committee's specific recommendation in paragraph 1.6 of the report in WT/BFA/153 and adopted both reports in WT/BFA/153 and WT/BFA/154.

15.2. At the July meeting, the General Council considered the report by the Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration on its meeting in June (WT/BFA/155). The General Council took note of the statement, approved the Budget Committee's specific recommendations in paragraph 2.13 of the report in WT/BFA/155 and adopted the report in WT/BFA/155.

15.3. At the October meeting, the General Council considered the report by the Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration on its meeting in September (WT/BFA/156). The General Council took note of the statement, adopted the report of the Budget Committee in WT/BFA/156 and approved the specific recommendations in paragraphs 4.2, 5.2 and 8.2 of the report.

15.4. At the December meeting, the General Council considered the report by the Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration on its two meetings in November (WT/BFA/158 and WT/BFA/160). The General Council took note of the statement, adopted the reports of the Budget Committee in WT/BFA/158 and WT/BFA/160 and approved the specific recommendations in paragraphs 2.5 and 3.15 of the report in WT/BFA/158.

16 WTO PENSION PLAN

16.1 Reports and Amendments (WT/GC/M/163 and WT/GC/M/165)

16.1. At the July meeting, the Chairperson of the Management Board of the WTO Pension Plan introduced the Annual Report of the Management Board for 2015 contained in document WT/L/985, and the Report of the Independent External Auditor on the Audit of the Financial Statements of the WTOPP in document WT/L/984. The General Council took note of the Annual Report of the Management Board for 2015, the Report of the Independent External Auditor on the Audit of the Financial Statements of the WTOPP, and the WTOPP Chairperson's statement.

16.2. At the December meeting, the Chairman introduced the Amendments to the Administrative Rules of the WTO Pension Plan and of Rules of Procedure of the Management Board contained in WT/GC/W/725. The General Council approved the amendments.

16.2 Election of Chairperson, Members, and Alternates to the Management Board (WT/GC/M/162; WT/GC/M/163; WT/GC/M/164 and WT/GC/M/165)

16.3. Article 4(a) of the Regulations of the WTO Pension Plan provides, inter alia, for the election by the General Council of a Chairperson, four members and four alternates to the Management Board of the Pension Plan, each for a three-year term.

16.4. At the May meeting, the General Council agreed to revert to the item on the election of a member and of an alternate at its July meeting.

16.5. At the July meeting, the Chairman proposed that the General Council elect Mrs Alicia Goujon (Mexico), Mrs Eleni Patibouli (Greece), Mr Ian Medcalf (Canada) and Mr Rodolfo Rivas (Israel) to serve as members and alternates, respectively, until the remainder of the terms of their respective predecessors. The General Council so agreed.¹³

¹³ The decision can be found in document WT/L/991.

16.6. At the October meeting, the Chairman reported on the ongoing consultations on the election of the Chairperson of the WTOPP Management Board. He also recalled that the Management Board originated in Regulation 8.1 of the Staff Regulations and was responsible for the management and administration of the retirement, death, disability and related benefits for the WTO staff and retirees. The General Council took note of the Chairman's statement.

16.7. At the December meeting, the Chairman reported that, despite consultations by the outgoing WTOPP Chair and the CBFA Chair with the regional group coordinators and interested delegations, consensus on the matter had yet to emerge. The outgoing WTOPP Chair had agreed to continue to chair the Management Board until Members would agree on his successor. He noted that the Management Board was not a regular WTO body and was therefore not referred to in the Guidelines for the Appointment of Officers to WTO bodies. He urged Members to adopt a pragmatic approach. The General Council took note of the statement.

17 ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES FOR MEMBERS IN ARREARS (WT/GC/M/161; WT/GC/M/162; WT/GC/M/163; WT/GC/M/164 AND WT/GC/M/165)

17.1. In October 2012, the General Council approved a recommendation from the Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration regarding revised Administrative Measures for Members in arrears, as contained in WT/BFA/132, Annex I. These new revised Measures entered into force on 1 January 2013. These Measures required that at the end of each meeting of the General Council, the Chairman of the Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration should provide information with regard to which Members and Observers were under Administrative Measures; and, the General Council Chairperson would request Members and Observers in Categories II and III to inform the Secretariat as to when the payment of arrears could be expected.

17.2. At the General Council meetings in February, May, July, October, and December, the Chairperson of the Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration provided information with regard to which Members were under Administrative Measures and the Chairman made the said request to Members and Observers in Categories II and III. The General Council took note of the statements.

18 WTO YOUNG PROFESSIONALS PROGRAMME – STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL (WT/GC/M/165)

18.1. At the December meeting, the Director-General provided an update on the WTO Young Professionals Programme. The General Council took note of the Director-General's statement.

19 WORKSHOP ON E-COMMERCE – STATEMENT BY KOREA (WT/GC/M/162)

19.1. At the May meeting, the representative of the Republic of Korea, on behalf of Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Turkey and Australia (MIKTA), announced that MIKTA would host a one-day workshop on electronic commerce in the first week of July and invited Members to this event. The General Council took note of the statement.

20 WORKSHOP ON THE WTO AND AGENDA 2030 – STATEMENT BY AUSTRALIA (WT/GC/M/164)

20.1. At the October meeting, the representative of Australia invited Members to a workshop on the WTO and Agenda 2030 hosted by Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Turkey and Australia (MIKTA) to be held at the WTO on 12 October. The General Council took note of the statement.

21 AFRICAN UNION LEVY – STATEMENT BY THE UNITED STATES (WT/GC/M/165)

21.1. At the December meeting, the representative of the United States made a statement on the African Union's levy on selected imports into Africa, which would fund peace support operations and other programs of the African Union, and called for more transparency on the matter. The representatives of the European Union, Japan and China spoke. The General Council took note of the statements.

22 INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE UNCTAD/WTO – REPORT OF THE JOINT ADVISORY GROUP ON ITS 50TH SESSION (WT/GC/M/165)

22.1. At the December meeting, the General Council considered a report of the Joint Advisory Group on the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO on its Fiftieth Session (ITC/AG(L)/264), which had been considered initially by the Committee on Trade and Development at its meeting on 24 November where it had been presented by the Chairperson of the Joint Advisory Group, Ambassador Negesh Kebret Batora (Ethiopia). The CTD Chairman made a statement on the Committee's consideration of the report. The representative of Benin (LDCs) spoke. The General Council took note of the statements and adopted the report of the Joint Advisory Group.

23 REVIEW OF WTO ACTIVITIES (WT/GC/M/165)

23.1. At the December meeting, the General Council considered annual reports for 2016 from WTO bodies that had been drawn up in pursuance of the Decision concerning procedures for an annual overview of WTO activities and for reporting under the WTO in document WT/L/105. The Chairman also made a statement on behalf of the WTGDF Chairperson concerning the discussions in the WGTDF in 2017. The representative of New Zealand spoke.

23.2. The General Council took note of the statements, adopted the report of the Committee on Trade and Development in document WT/COMTD/91, took note of the reports of other WTO bodies, including the reports of the bodies under the Plurilateral Trade Agreements, in documents WT/DSB/71, WT/TPR/387, G/L/1168, S/C/50, IP/C/75, WT/CTE/23, WT/BOP/R/112, WT/BFA/159, WT/REG/26, WT/WGTDF/15, WT/WGTTT/18, GPA/141 and WT/L/992.

23.3. The General Council then adopted the draft Annual Report for 2016 of the General Council (WT/GC/W/726), on the understanding that the Secretariat would make the necessary adjustments to it as to include matters considered at that meeting.

24 APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR-GENERAL (WT/GC/M/164)

24.1. At the October meeting, the Chairman outlined¹⁴ the process for the appointment of the Director-General. In particular, he noted that, in line with the agreed procedures (WT/L/509), the appointment process would begin on 1 December this year and that he would formally notify the opening of the process in a communication to all Members prior to that date. He recalled the announcement made by the Director-General at the July meeting that he would be available for a second term if Members found it useful, and noted that the Director-General would submit a letter to him along these lines, in accordance with the procedures.¹⁵ He also highlighted some of the time-lines for the process, which would be concluded by 31 May 2017 at the latest. The General Council took note of the Chairman's statement.

25 APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS TO WTO BODIES (WT/GC/M/161; WT/GC/M/162; WT/GC/M/163; WT/GC/M/164; AND WT/GC/M/165)

25.1. At the February meeting, the Chairman recalled that in accordance with the Guidelines for Appointment of Officers to WTO Bodies adopted by the General Council in 2002 (WT/L/510) and the related practical steps to improve their implementation agreed in 2012 (JOB/GC/22), he, together with the serving Chairperson of the Dispute Settlement Body, Ambassador Harald Neple (Norway), and Ambassador Jonathan Fried (Canada), former Chairman of the General Council, had conducted consultations on a slate of names for the appointment of Chairpersons to WTO regular bodies listed in Groups 1, 2, 4 and 5 in the Annex to the Guidelines. In addition, they had also consulted on the appointment of a new Chairperson for the Dispute Settlement Body in Special Session following the end of term of its Chair.

25.2. In line with the practical steps, they had met first with the coordinators of the four broad regional groupings (developed countries, Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean). A time-period had also been provided in which they would be available to meet with

¹⁴ The Chairman's statement on this matter can be found in JOB/GC/107.

¹⁵ On 3 November 2016, the Chairman circulated a communication to WTO Members on the process of Appointment of the next Director-General, containing a letter from the Director-General notifying the Chairman of his intention to seek re-appointment for a further term. This was circulated in JOB/GC/109.

all interested delegations. Consultations had taken place over some five weeks to provide a greater opportunity for all interested delegations to meet with them. They had consulted all delegations that had come forward and had requested a meeting and had regularly met with the four Group coordinators and had informed them of developments. The process had included an informal open-ended Heads-of-Delegation meeting which had been held on 23 February and in which he had given a detailed overview of the process and made a statement in this respect¹⁶.

25.3. On the basis of our consultations, it was their understanding that the following slate of names could be acceptable to the Membership:

General Council	H.E. Mr. Harald Neple (Norway)
Dispute Settlement Body	H.E. Mr. Xavier Carim (South Africa)
Trade Policy Review Body	Ms Irene B.K. Young (Hong Kong, China)
Council for Trade in Goods	H.E. Mr. Hamish McCormick (Australia)
Council for Trade in Services	H.E. Mr. Gustavo Miguel Vanerio Balbela (Uruguay)
Council for TRIPS	H.E. Mr. Modest Jonathan Mero (Tanzania)
Committee on Trade and Development	H.E. Mr. Christopher Onyanga Aparr (Uganda)
Committee on Balance-of-Payments Restrictions	H.E. Mr. M. Shameem Ahsan (Bangladesh)
Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration	H.E. Mrs. Inga Ernstsone (Latvia)
Committee on Trade and Environment	H.E. Mr. Héctor Casanueva (Chile)
Committee on Regional Trade Agreements	H.E. Mr. Daniel Blockert (Sweden)
Working Group on Trade, Debt and Finance	H.E. Mr. Atanas Atanasov Papanizov (Bulgaria)
Working Group on Trade and Transfer of Technology	H.E. Mr. Luis Enrique Chávez Basagoitia (Peru)
Preparatory Committee on Trade Facilitation	H.E. Mr. Esteban Conejos (Philippines)

25.4. Appointments for those bodies would be for one year as usual and they would be made formally by the WTO bodies concerned at their subsequent meetings in 2016. Regarding the DSB in Special Session, following the end of term of its Chairman, Ambassador Ronald Saborio, consultations had been conducted on a new Chair. As a result of those consultations, it was their understanding that there was consensus on H.E. Mr. Mame Baba Cisse (Senegal) to chair the DSB

¹⁶ The Chairman's statement at the HODs meeting on 23 February can be found in Annex 2 of WT/GC/M/161.

in Special Session¹⁷. He also noted that Ambassador Neple, as the future General Council Chairman, had discussed with Ambassador Alfredo Suescum so that he continued as Friend of the General Council Chair for the work programme on electronic commerce. The General Council took note of the Chairman's statement and of the consensus on the slate of names for the appointment of officers in the WTO bodies that he had mentioned.

25.5. The representatives of Chinese Taipei; Costa Rica; Tanzania; Benin (LDCs); Lesotho¹⁸ and Sri Lanka spoke. The General Council took note of the statements.

25.6. In keeping with Paragraph 7.3 of the Guidelines for Appointment of Officers to WTO Bodies – the outgoing Chairperson of the Council for Trade in Goods (CTG) and the Chairman on behalf of the outgoing Chairperson of the Council for Trade in Services (CTS) were to conduct consultations to select Chairpersons for the bodies established under their respective Councils. In relation to this, both Chairpersons would be starting consultations for the appointment of Chairpersons of the subsidiary bodies of the CTG and the CTS. The General Council took note of the statements.

25.7. At the May meeting, the Goods Council Chair made a statement on the appointment of officers in the subsidiary bodies of the Goods Council. The Chairman and the representatives of Oman¹⁹; Chinese Taipei and the Republic of Korea spoke. The General Council took note of the statements.

25.8. At the July meeting, the Chairman recalled the fax he sent on 28 June to all delegations informing them that he had been consulting on the Chairmanships of the Negotiating Group on Market Access, the CTS-SS and the Preparatory Committee on Trade Facilitation, following the departure of their respective Chairs – Ambassador Remigi Winzap (Switzerland), Ambassador Gabriel Duque (Colombia), and Ambassador Esteban Conejos (Philippines). He said that the process was still ongoing and consultations would resume after the summer break. The representative of Switzerland spoke. The General Council took note of the statements.

25.9. At the October meeting, the Chairman announced that there was consensus on the appointments of Ambassador Didier Chambovey (Switzerland) as Chairperson of the Negotiating Group on Market Access, Ambassador Hector Marcelo Cima (Argentina) as Chairperson of the CTS-SS and Ambassador Mariam MD Salleh (Malaysia) as Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee on Trade Facilitation. The representatives of Barbados (GRULAC) and Sri Lanka (Asia and the Pacific) spoke. The General Council took note of the statements.

25.10. At the December meeting, the Chairman said that in accordance with the Guidelines for the Appointment of Officers to WTO bodies in document WT/L/510 and the practical steps to improve the implementation of the Guidelines (JOB/GC/22), he would be starting the selection process for the appointment of chairpersons to the WTO bodies in Groups 1, 2, 4 and 5 of the Annex to the Guidelines. In accordance with paragraph 7.1(b) of the Guidelines, he would be assisted in the selection process by the serving Chairman of the Dispute Settlement Body, Ambassador Xavier Carim (South Africa) and Ambassador Jonathan Fried (Canada), former General Council Chairman. The General Council took note of the statement, which had been made pursuant to the Guidelines for the Appointment of Officers.

¹⁷ On 15 March, the Chairman sent a fax to all delegations informing them that Ambassador Mame Baba Cisse (Senegal) had withdrawn his nomination as Chair of the DSB-SS and that, in his place the African Group had nominated Ambassador Stephen Karau (Kenya) for that position. After consulting with Members, on 31 March, he sent a fax to all delegations which stated that since messages of support and no further comments had been received within the given period, it was his understanding that there was consensus among delegations on the appointment of Ambassador Stephen Karau (Kenya) as Chairman of the DSB-SS and that he would be formally elected at the negotiating group's next meeting.

¹⁸ At its request, the statement of Lesotho, on behalf of the African Group, at the HODs meeting on 23 February was incorporated in the minutes of the February meeting and can be found in Annex 3 of WT/GC/M/161.

¹⁹ At its request, the statement of Oman at the Goods Council meeting on 11 May was incorporated in the minutes of the May meeting and can be found in Annex 2 of WT/GC/M/162.

25.1 Consultations on the Guidelines for the Appointment of Officers – Report by the Chairman (WT/GC/M/165)

25.11. At the December meeting, the Chairman reported that during his consultations he had not sensed a strong desire to revise or modify the Guidelines. Some delegations had brought ideas to the table but others had however expressed concerns on some of them. He noted that both group coordinators and delegations had stressed the importance of clarity about the guidelines and the process. Therefore, an Open-ended meeting to provide an opportunity to delegations to go through the guidelines and the so called "practical steps" to improve their implementation was scheduled for 15 December. Following the feedback from the consultations, he would start the process early to allow sufficient time for group coordinators to consult with their respective constituencies. The representatives of Oman and Morocco (African Group) spoke. The General Council took note of the statements.

26 ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON (WT/GC/M/161)

26.1. At the February meeting, the Chairman, as the outgoing presiding officer of the General Council, made a statement. The General Council then unanimously elected H.E. Mr Harald Neple (Norway) to the Chair.

26.2. The Director-General, the newly-elected Chairman, and the representatives of Tanzania; Lesotho and Kenya spoke. The General Council took note of the statements.
