

WORK PROGRAMME ON SMALL ECONOMIES

Proposed Framework and Procedures

Communication from the Chairman of the General Council

The following text is being submitted to Members by the Chairman of the General Council for consideration at a resumed meeting of the 15 February General Council to be convened shortly. The text is based on the proposal circulated on 12 February by delegations representing the small-economy Members in document WT/GC/W/468, and reflects comments and suggestions made at informal consultations held on the Chairman's behalf, and at the request of the General Council on 13 February, by Deputy Director-General Mr. Ablassé Ouedraogo.

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1. Paragraph 35 of the Doha Ministerial Declaration (WT/MIN(01)/DEC/1) states the following:

"We agree to a work programme, under the auspices of the General Council, to examine issues relating to the trade of small economies. The objective of this work is to frame responses to the trade-related issues identified for the fuller integration of small, vulnerable economies into the multilateral trading system, and not to create a sub-category of WTO Members. The General Council shall review the work programme and make recommendations for action to the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference".
 2. In pursuance of this mandate, the Work Programme shall be undertaken in accordance with the following framework and procedures:
 - (a) The Work Programme shall remain under the overall responsibility of the General Council.
 - (b) The General Council shall have the Work Programme on Small Economies (WPSE) as a standing item on its agenda.
 - (c) The objective of this work is to frame responses to the trade-related issues identified for the fuller integration of small, vulnerable economies into the multilateral trading system.
 - (d) The General Council shall instruct the CTD to have a programme of work on small economies which will be conducted in dedicated sessions of the CTD.
 - (e) The CTD shall report regularly to the General Council on the progress of work in the dedicated sessions.

- (f) The Chairperson of the regular CTD shall also be the Chair for the dedicated sessions of the CTD.
- (g) The dedicated sessions of the CTD shall have an agreed calendar of meetings to complete the work under its mandate.
- (h) The CTD will hold informal meetings as necessary with a view to assisting the formal process in the dedicated sessions of the CTD.
- (i) In accordance with the outcome of the programme of work in the CTD, the General Council shall, as appropriate, direct relevant subsidiary bodies to frame responses to the trade-related issues identified by the CTD with a view to making recommendations for action to the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference as mandated. This does not prejudice the right of Members to submit for consideration proposals relating to the concerns of small economies to the relevant WTO bodies.
- (j) As and when necessary, the dedicated sessions of the CTD will work in collaboration with relevant subsidiary bodies.
- (k) Members are urged to make their own contributions to the work of the CTD under its programme of work. The General Council shall instruct the WTO Secretariat to provide relevant information and factual analysis, *inter alia*,
 - (i) on the impact of WTO rules on Small Economies;
 - (ii) on the constraints faced by Small Economies as well as their shortfalls in institutional and administrative capacities, including in the area of human resources;
 - (iii) on the effects of Trade Liberalization on Small Economies.

The CTD will also request information and analysis from other agencies and bodies that carry out work on small economies.

3. As instructed by Ministers in Doha, the overall objective of the Work Programme shall be the timely completion of the mandate as contained in paragraph 35 of the Doha Declaration.

The General Council shall take note of the above framework and procedures for the conduct of the work programme on small economies. Accordingly, the substantive work on the WPSE will begin in the dedicated sessions of the CTD as soon as possible thereafter.
