



**Committee on Agriculture
Special Session**

**REPORT BY AMBASSADOR GLORIA ABRAHAM PERALTA TO THE
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE IN SPECIAL SESSION**

25 NOVEMBER 2021

Introduction

1. As indicated in my convening message, the purpose of this meeting is to discuss the revised draft text which I circulated on 23 November in my report to the Trade Negotiation Committee in document TN/AG/50.
2. I decided to postpone this meeting by one day in light of the late circulation of the document and to give you time to read it before the meeting.
3. My introductory statement is going to be short. You have all read the document by now including my topic-by-topic description of the state of play and I do not intend to restate them here.
4. I cannot overemphasize the importance of our meeting today.
5. We are five days before the start of the Twelfth Ministerial Conference.
6. My objective today is to hear your thoughts and views on this text.
7. As mentioned in my report, this text is a result of a very intensive process of consultations following the circulation of my end of July text and in which all Members were involved either directly or through their Group Coordinators.
8. I have invited you to engage with one another constructively and you have done so.
9. You have not hesitated to share with one another proposals you considered necessary to address the concerns of the Membership, and to work with one another to identify the most promising paths forward towards consensus to explore ways to narrow gaps and explore textual compromise options.
10. Many useful inputs came out of this process including during the "Room D" process.
11. Let me again emphasize how grateful I am to you the Members for your tireless efforts and constructive attitude in the talks thus far.
12. To the extent that the revised draft negotiating text represents a useful contribution to the preparations for the Ministerial Conference, credit is due to your hard work, and determination.
13. But despite this intense engagement, we did not manage to make as much progress as we had hoped on some key issues – especially Domestic Support, Public Stockholding and Market Access.
14. Members have also struggled to find ways to identify a balance across negotiating topics that they consider acceptable.

15. I urge you all to acknowledge the gaps in negotiating positions, as well as the implications these have for our ability to move forward on our shared agenda. It is against this background that I have decided to issue the revised draft text.

16. Many Members will consider this text as less than ideal, insofar as it does not fully reflect their initial ambitions. But all Members' positions have to be respected and balanced in a fair manner.

17. This text reflects the reality of where we are today. It acknowledges the current state of play in Members' positions and the difficulties we face in building convergence or narrowing the gaps on some key issues.

18. The elements that are in the text come from you. And the elements that are not in the text are not there simply because you were not in a position to sufficiently bridge the gaps or find the appropriate trade-offs.

19. This text therefore constitutes my best attempt to put on the table a balanced and realistic package that could garner the support of all Members for an outcome which all may be able to accept.

20. It is our collective responsibility to present to Ministers a text that is manageable. We cannot present them with a text that reflects significant divergences in negotiating positions and still expect them to bridge these in just a few days. This is especially so when we've not been able to do so over a period of several months.

21. Success at MC12 will demonstrate that WTO Members can take steps forward together and reaffirm their commitment towards the achievement of our shared objectives on food and agriculture. It will also prove the WTO's relevance in today's world.

22. Success at MC12 by finding a realistic compromise preserving Members' main interests will prepare for a fruitful post-MC12 negotiation by providing Members with as much guidance as is possible under the circumstances on all the topics under negotiation and delivering some immediate outcomes.

23. Success at MC12 will ensure last but not least that all the good work undertaken in the last months and weeks, including on the issues where convergence could not be found, is not lost.

24. This text does not represent the end of the road for our negotiations, but rather a major confidence-building milestone to reinvigorate the negotiation process towards MC13 and future ministerial conferences.

25. It will be Ministers' responsibility to find solutions to the remaining issues next week.

26. My sincere hope is that this text constitutes a significant step forward in the right direction to help Ministers in their task at MC12.

27. I expect to hear your candid assessment of the text and how we could utilize the next few days in the best possible manner to prepare the negotiations on agriculture at the Ministerial Conference.

Conclusion

28. I listened very carefully to you. I will reflect on your views and positions expressed during this meeting.

29. My door remains open to those of you willing to see me in the coming days.

30. I will also consider the possibility of holding some last consultations in the coming days if I deem it useful to contribute to the best possible preparation of discussions at the Ministerial level.

31. Once more, I think that, if Members can continue to demonstrate commitment, goodwill and flexibility, a successful Ministerial Conference is within reach. Let us keep that goal in sight and redouble our efforts to ensure that the success of MC12 enables trade to contribute positively to the achievement of our shared objectives for the future.

32. I remain fully committed to facilitating convergence and will do everything humanly possible to work with you all in the coming days before and during the Ministerial Conference to achieve a positive outcome on agriculture at MC12.
