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**General Council**

**APPOINTMENT OF THE NEXT DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

INFORMAL MEETING AT THE LEVEL OF HEADS OF DELEGATIONS

THURSDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2020

*Statement by the General Council Chair, H.E. Dr David Walker*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1. Good morning. Welcome to this informal meeting of Heads of Delegation and thank you for attending at short notice.

1.2. As I announced in my statement at our previous meeting on 18 September, circulated in JOB/GC/244, the purpose of this meeting is to allow me, assisted by the Facilitators in this exercise, the Chair of the Dispute Settlement Body, Amb. Castillo, and the Chair of the Trade Policy Review Body, Amb. Aspelund, to report to the membership on the outcome of the second round of consultations concerning the selection of the next Director-General. Once again, this is in accordance with the Procedures for the Appointment of Directors-General in WT/L/509 and is also in line with our commitment to transparency, inclusiveness and full participation, as we set out in the modalities for Phase 3 of this process, reflected in document JOB/GC/243.

**2 ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTATIONS**

2.1. The Facilitators and I conducted the consultations over six days, in the period from 24 September to 6 October. As indicated in JOB/GC/244, the logistical and technical arrangements for this second round of consultations were the same as for the first round, including with respect to non-resident delegations. As was the case for the first round, the entire membership remained fully engaged in and committed to this process. The Facilitators and I are grateful for this very positive response, and for the continued adherence to the modalities for Phase 3 that I referred to earlier. It is clear that all Members attach great importance to this process.

**3 SUBSTANCE AND RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATIONS**

3.1. Consistent with JOB/GC/243 and 244, each Member was asked again the same question, i.e. "What are your preferences?". Delegations were invited to express a maximum of two preferences in this second round, without ranking. We urged them to provide two preferences in order to enhance the efficiency of the process. Once again, we informed all Members that we would not accept any negative preference.

3.2. In line with paragraph 18 of the Procedures, I will now report to you the outcome of this second round of consultations. As for the first round, the outcome of this round is the result of Members' expressions of preferences, and our assessment was again guided strictly by the elements set out in paragraph 17 of the Procedures – and I refer in this respect to my statement in JOB/GC/244.

3.3. The results of your preferences were communicated yesterday to the five Members who had candidates in this second round. In that meeting, I noted that paragraph 18 of the Procedures provides that: "It is understood that the candidate or candidates least likely to attract consensus shall withdraw".

3.4. As you know and again consistent with JOB/GC/243 and 244, three candidates are expected to withdraw at the end of this round. Thus, there will be only two candidates in the third and final round.

3.5. On the basis of all of the above, and in keeping with the Procedures, our assessment of the preferences provided to us by you during this second round of consultations is that the following three candidates are least likely to attract consensus, and therefore expected to withdraw. These three candidates, in the order in which their nominations were received, and not in ascending or descending order of preferences, are:

Ambassador Amina C. Mohamed (Republic of Kenya)

Mr Mohammad Maziad AL-TUWAIJRI (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)

Dr Liam Fox (United Kingdom)

3.6. Therefore, we will begin the third and final round of consultations based on a revised slate of two candidates, again in the order in which their nominations were received, as follows:

Dr. (Mrs.) Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (Nigeria)

H.E. Yoo Myung-hee (Republic of Korea)

3.7. This final round of consultations will begin on 19 October and continue through 27 October. The arrangements for the consultations will remain the same, including with respect to non-resident delegations. A communication will be sent out shortly after this meeting.

3.8. Let me once again stress that, in line with paragraph 6 of the Procedures, our aim continues to be to encourage and facilitate the building of consensus among Members, and to assist in moving from this final slate of two candidates to a decision on appointment. As this is the final round of the consultation process, it should bring us to the point where we can make a recommendation to the General Council concerning that decision. This means, as provided for in paragraph 17 of the Procedures, identifying the candidate around whom consensus can be built.

3.9. With this in mind, we will invite delegations to respond to the question: "What is your preference?". Once again, the preferences that you have expressed in the first two rounds will not be used in this final round. I would therefore urge all Members to come forward once again to meet with us and to express their preference on the basis of the final slate of two candidates. As in the previous rounds, the information we receive from Members will be treated by us in the strictest confidence.

3.10. In assessing the information that we receive and in reporting to Members, we will continue to be guided by the elements set out in paragraph 17 of the Procedures.

3.11. As we have done for the first two rounds, the outcome of the final round will be reported to all Members at an open-ended meeting of Heads of Delegation to be held as soon as possible following the conclusion of the consultations. The Members who nominated the final two candidates will be informed of the outcome before the rest of the membership. Relevant communications concerning the Heads of Delegation meeting will be sent in due course.

3.12. Let me again reiterate, as I have done since the start, that this process is your process: the decision to appoint the new Director-General will be for you and only you, the Members, to make.

#### **4 TRIBUTE TO CANDIDATES**

4.1. Before I end my statement, let me express, on behalf of the entire membership, deep gratitude to Ambassador Amina C. Mohamed; Mr Mohammad Maziad Al-Tuwaijri; and Dr Liam Fox for their participation in this selection process. It was clear that Members consider them individuals of outstanding qualifications, with extensive and varied experience in international relations at the very highest levels of policy-making. In their respective careers, they have been firm promoters of multilateralism and of the rules-based trading system in a range of different capacities, and I am

certain that the WTO can continue to count on their commitment in the future. We fully realize, having listened to you, the Members, that making a choice has been very difficult. I am sure you will all agree with us that in participating in the selection process, the candidates have all made a significant contribution to the standing and image of the WTO.

4.2. The Facilitators and I would also like to pay tribute to the Governments of the Republic of Kenya, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom, and to the respective Geneva Representatives, Amb. Cleopa Mailu, Amb. Saleh Al-Husseini and Amb. Julian Braithwaite for contributing to this process with dignity, fairness and a constructive spirit. Their approach is most commendable and paves the way for the smooth continuation and conclusion of the process of appointing the next Director-General. They have all reaffirmed once again their strong commitment to the multilateral trading system.

4.3. This concludes my statement, which will be circulated very shortly in a JOB document.

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