



21 December 2020

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General Council

**AGENDA ITEM 2: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BALI, NAIROBI AND BUENOS AIRES
OUTCOMES – STATEMENT BY THE CHAIR**

WEDNESDAY, 16 DECEMBER 2020

1.1. This item remains on the agenda so that the General Council can continue to follow up, in a horizontal and transparent manner, on the Ministerial decisions adopted in Bali, Nairobi and Buenos Aires.

1.2. As always, my statement today is based on the information provided by the Chairs of the regular bodies on the implementation work taking place further to Ministerial mandates in their respective areas. Let me also point out that matters related to the Work Programme on Small Economies, and the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce will be taken up in the separate agenda items.

1.3. In the area of Agriculture, the Committee on Agriculture continued its follow-up on the Bali TRQ Decision at its recent November meeting, in light of the recommendations of the review approved by the General Council last year. The Committee also considered the proposed TRQ underfill Tracking Register. I understand that, given some concerns expressed on the existing scope of the underfill mechanism, the approval of the draft tracking register was deferred to a future meeting of the Committee – when the mechanism is actually invoked.

1.4. As regards the Bali Decision on Public Stockholding for Food Security Purposes, the notification presented by a Member subsequent to its invocation of the Decision continued to be reviewed by the Committee at its November meeting, based on Members' written questions.

1.5. Turning to the LDC Services Waiver, in October, the LDC Group proposed that the Council for Trade in Services organize a webinar to bring together LDC service suppliers and consumers of LDC services in Members having granted preferences under the LDC Services Waiver. Just before the CTS meeting of 4 December, the LDC Group circulated a suggested outline for the webinar. Members generally found that it provided greater clarity about the objective and scope of the webinar and expressed broad support for an event that would enable an exchange of information and experiences. The Council agreed that the Secretariat would prepare a draft programme for the webinar to be submitted to Members for consideration and further views.

1.6. On Preferential Rules of Origin for LDCs, at the November meeting of the Committee on Rules of Origin, several aspects of the Bali and Nairobi Ministerial Decisions were discussed. Members considered a Secretariat note on the utilization rates and two submissions by the LDC Group. The first reiterated the LDC preference for rules of origin based on the value "of non-originating materials", as noted in the Nairobi Ministerial Decision. In the second submission, the LDC Group called for an intensification of the examination work of the Committee on Rules of Origin, the identification of best practices and the preparation of a report to be submitted at MC12. In line with the Decision, Members conducted an "annual review" of developments in this area and adopted an annual report for the General Council to take note of – this is contained in document G/RO/91, to which I draw your attention.

1.7. Regarding Duty-Free Quota-Free market access for LDCs, at its November meeting, the CTD undertook its annual review of the steps taken to provide DFQF market access to LDCs – as mandated by the Bali Decision. It was once again not possible for the Secretariat to prepare the mandated report, as divergent views persist on its scope and coverage. Nevertheless, the annual

review provided the opportunity for some Members to share information on their DFQF schemes for LDCs.

1.8. Concerning the Monitoring Mechanism on Special and Differential Treatment, despite the meeting of the CTD's Dedicated Session which was held in November, the situation persists as no written submissions have been made and, as a result, the Mechanism is yet to be operationalized. Additionally, there is still no common understanding on how to proceed with the long overdue review of the Mechanism. The CTD Chair urged Members to come to a common understanding on the way forward.

1.9. With respect to the Bali Decision on Trade and Transfer of Technology, at a recent meeting of the Working Group, the Chair, on the basis of the consultations he held, noted that, while delegations were willing to engage with a view to achieving an outcome on transfer of technology, advancing the mandate would require leadership on the side of the proponents. The African and the LDC Groups stated their interest in exploring ways to revisit discussions and revive the Working Group's activities.

1.10. Regarding Aid for Trade, earlier this month, an online briefing session was organized to provide Members with further information on the Aid-for-Trade Stocktaking Event which will be held on 23 - 25 March 2021. The purpose of the Stocktaking Event is to collect, discuss and disseminate information concerning Members' Aid-for-Trade needs and responses to the trade related challenges triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. Members have been invited to communicate, by 31 December, details on the sessions they would like to organize.

1.11. And lastly, a brief update concerning the Trade Facilitation Agreement, where the current rate of ratification stands at 93% of the membership.

1.12. This concludes my report.
