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MALAYSIA

Multilateral Trading System

Despite Malaysia's participation in numerous bilateral and regional trading arrangements, Malaysia still believes in the primacy of the rules-based multilateral trading system. Our trade policy is reflective of the principles and rules enshrined in the WTO Agreements. We also ensure that all our regional trade arrangements respect the principles and guidelines of the WTO.

The WTO has effective rules that provide stability, security and predictability to conduct trade. However, recent display of protectionist sentiments and the introduction of impending non-tariff measures under the guise of unsustainable production can lead to restriction in trade. The WTO membership must be form in dealing with such challenges.

Doha Development Agenda

Despite of the delay in concluding the negotiations, Malaysia remains committed to the Doha Round as the means of delivering multilateral trade liberalisation. Malaysia believes that pragmatic, realistic and flexible approaches are needed in order to achieve a positive outcome for all.

The finalisation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) in Bali 2013, the elimination of export subsidies in Agriculture in Nairobi 2015 and the entry into force of the Protocol Amending the TRIPs Agreement on Public Health in 2017 shows that the DDA is still doable.

In Agriculture negotiations, Malaysia is willing to consider any potential approaches in domestic support so long as it could move the process forward and bridge divergences among Members.

With regard to fisheries subsidies negotiations, Malaysia is willing to support the initiative to strengthen multilateral disciplines on measures to address subsidies that contribute to overcapacity, overfishing and Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU) in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 14.6.

On domestic regulation, Malaysia views this as an important aspect in the overall balance of the services negotiation. It is important that disciplines on domestic regulation are not onerous and burdensome to service suppliers and Members should have the right to regulate.

As a developing country, Malaysia supports the notion that the needs of developing countries and LDCs in particular, must be given proper attention in line with the overall agenda of the Doha Round. Therefore, development-related issues should be part of the deliverables of MC11. While focusing on the DDA, we must not lose sight of global developments that can alter the traditional trade norms and the way business is conducted. This calls for a collective response in the WTO to make the organisation relevant today.

On e-commerce for instance, we cannot hold on to a mandate given 19 years ago. There has been so much development since then, and e-commerce is rapidly changing the mode of trade in many countries. We have to be realistic and eventually address the need for multilateral rules.

We also think that the time is ripe for the WTO to have a structured work programme to address MSMEs and investment facilitation.

The WTO must support the integration of MSMEs into the global value chain considering the fact that MSMEs account for a very high percentage of enterprises in our economies.

Taking on new issues in the WTO does not necessarily mean we are relegating the importance of concluding the DDA or diminishing the development dimension. It only means that the WTO is being realistic and responding to evolving global developments. In fact, by not addressing these issues, we are only marginalising a large number of the WTO membership as other arrangements will emerge outside the WTO. We believe there is sufficient space in the WTO to deal with the DDA and new/emerging issues.

Finally let me end by expressing Malaysia's hope that this 11th WTO Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires will be able to produce some meaningful decisions that would set a clearer direction for the WTO negotiations in 2018 and beyond.

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