



15 November 2021

(21-8622)

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**Ministerial Conference
Twelfth Session
Geneva, 30 November-3 December 2021**

Original: English

TRADE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRUCTURED DISCUSSIONS (TESSD)

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON TRADE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The following communication, dated 15 November 2021, is being circulated at the request of Albania; Australia; Austria; Belgium; Bulgaria; Canada; Chad; Chile; China; Colombia; Costa Rica; Croatia; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; European Union; Fiji; Finland; France; The Gambia; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Iceland; Ireland; Israel; Italy; Japan; Kazakhstan; Korea, Republic of; Latvia; Liechtenstein; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Maldives; Malta; Mexico; Moldova, Republic of; Montenegro; Netherlands; New Zealand; North Macedonia; Norway; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Senegal; Singapore; Slovak Republic; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu; United Kingdom; and the United States.

We, the Ministers representing the following Members of the WTO: Albania; Australia; Austria; Belgium; Bulgaria; Canada; Chad; Chile; China; Colombia; Costa Rica; Croatia; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; European Union; Fiji; Finland; France; The Gambia; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Iceland; Ireland; Israel; Italy; Japan; Kazakhstan; Korea, Republic of; Latvia; Liechtenstein; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Maldives; Malta; Mexico; Moldova, Republic of; Montenegro; Netherlands; New Zealand; North Macedonia; Norway; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Senegal; Singapore; Slovak Republic; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu; United Kingdom; and the United States issue this statement at the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12):

Noting the communication on trade and environmental sustainability in document WT/CTE/W/249 that launched the Trade and Environmental Sustainability Structured Discussions in November 2020;

Recalling that sustainable development and the protection and preservation of the environment are fundamental goals of the WTO, enshrined in the preamble of the Marrakesh Agreement establishing the WTO;

Recognizing the importance of multilateral environmental agreements, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Paris Agreement, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), among others;

Underscoring the need for inclusive approaches that reflect the circumstances of the diversity of the WTO's membership and their specific development needs;

Recognizing that international trade and trade policy can and must support environmental and climate goals and promote more sustainable production and consumption, taking into account the importance of a just transition and making progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

Stressing the importance of environmental sustainability as a central issue for the WTO agenda and *noting* the important work undertaken in the WTO Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE), as well as other WTO regular Committees or Bodies where environment matters arise;

Reaffirming that the Structured Discussions are not meant to duplicate other initiatives in the WTO, or indeed any other international or global initiative as well as existing WTO agreements and mandates;

Highlighting the valuable inputs that stakeholders have given to the Structured Discussions on Trade and Environmental Sustainability, which have already served to enhance discussions by bringing scientific and data-based evidence to deliberations and reiterating the commitment to continue this dialogue and enhance transparency;

Noting the recent and current efforts by a diversity of WTO Members to address and promote dialogue and information sharing at the WTO on issues where trade, environmental and climate policies intersect, including on circular economy; natural disasters; climate change mitigation and adaptation; fossil fuel subsidies reform; plastic pollution; combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and ensuring legal and sustainable trade in wildlife; the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity; sustainable oceans; facilitating access to green technology; sustainable tourism; sustainable agriculture as well as trade in environmental goods and services;

And also noting other ministerial statements¹ on issues related to trade and environmental sustainability and understanding that nothing in this statement compels any supporter to join any of them;

Agree to:

1. Intensify our work on areas of common interest and to identify concrete actions that participating Members could take individually or collectively to expand opportunities for environmentally sustainable trade in an inclusive and transparent way, consistent with their obligations;
2. Launch dedicated discussions on how trade-related climate measures and policies can best contribute to climate and environmental goals and commitments while being consistent with WTO rules and principles;
3. Explore opportunities and possible approaches for promoting and facilitating trade in environmental goods and services to meet environmental and climate goals, including through addressing supply chain, technical and regulatory elements;
4. Identify and compile best practices, as well as explore opportunities for voluntary actions and partnerships to ensure that trade and trade policies are supportive of and contribute to: (i) achieving a more resource-efficient circular economy; (ii) promoting sustainable supply chains and addressing the challenges and opportunities arising from the use of sustainability standards and any related measures, in particular for developing Members; and (iii) promoting and facilitating access to environmental goods and services, including encouraging the global uptake of new and emerging low-emissions and other climate-friendly technologies;
5. Identify challenges and opportunities for sustainable trade, including for developing and least developed Members, and encourage enhanced collaboration among participating Members in strengthening capacity building and technical assistance on trade and environmental sustainability, including through Aid for Trade;
6. Support continued discussions on the environmental effects and trade impacts of relevant subsidies and the role of the WTO in addressing these;

¹ Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform and Plastic Pollution and Environmentally Sustainable Plastics Trade.

7. Adopt the Roadmap, and take steps to advance work, and commit to review progress after one year, to take stock and with a view to adapting the TESSD work plan.
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ANNEX

ROADMAP TESSD – 2022

- **February 2022:** TESSD meeting – adopt workplan to implement operational part of MC12 statement.
 - **April 2022:** TESSD meeting – implementation of workplan. Begin planning and preparations for high-level event.
 - **July 2022:** TESSD meeting – take stock of implementation status of MC12 statement and need to adapt the workplan to achieve full implementation of MC12 statement.
 - **October 2022:** TESSD meeting – implementation of workplan.
 - **December 2022:** High-level stocktaking event to review progress achieved (notably identification of good practices, voluntary actions and partnerships in the relevant areas) and adopt next steps towards MC13.
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