

**General Council Meeting
(07-08 October 2021)**

Statement by India – Delivered by Ambassador & PR to the WTO

Agenda Item 13. Appointment of officers to WTO Bodies – Report by the Chair

Thank you Chair for your statement and for initiating this process to review the existing guidelines at the request of my delegation and also others.

2. As we had stated in our intervention on this issue at various fora, the current process is arbitrary and lacks transparency. It also does not ensure proper rotation of Chairs and does not always achieve balanced representation of Membership from different groups. The lack of clear-cut guidelines has also allowed side deals among the facilitators/office bearers, which the rest of the Membership are not aware of.

3. Therefore, during the consultations we had provided you with some suggestions and ideas, both orally and through written submission, for the benefit of larger membership. I wish to highlight some of them:

Representation

- i. The representation for each group in a year should be prefixed depending on the size of the group, namely, Developed, AGDC, GRULAC, Africa and countries which do not fall in any of these groups.

Rotation System

- ii. The Chairmanship of each Committee should sequentially rotate between different groups. The current practice of Developed Group alternating with the other regional groups should be done away with. This amounts to reverse S&DT for developed countries.
- iii. If any group is not interested to stake its claim over the Chairmanship of a particular Committee for that year, then it will automatically go to the next group in a sequential manner. The same should be announced to all the Members. A Group can switch/swap the membership of a Committee with an another interested Group, with such arrangements being informed to the Membership in a transparent manner. If a group foregoes its chance of a particular Committee during the year in which its turn was, nor enters into a reciprocal arrangement with another Group, then it will forfeit its representation for that year and it would have to wait for its next turn only after the rest of the groups have had their chance.
- iv. If any Group does not send nominations for the Chair of a particular committee for which it's turn was nor is exchanging it with other Group, then that position should be offered to the next Group in the second stage of selection process. This process can be repeated till we find a candidate from a regional group for the Chair.

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Transparency

- v. At every stage of the selection process, there should be a clear-cut communication process for the benefit of Members for transparency. The full list of Chairmanships on offer, including for which groups, should be published right at the beginning of selection process. The Regional Coordinator (RC) shall provide the initial slates of vacancies available to the group, the nominations received, the internal process on handling multiple nominations within the group. Once the negotiations are completed within the Group and list of nominations finalised, then only the RC shall provide the nominations to respective office bearers for finalisation. RC's shall initiate similar round of consultations within the Group for vacancies not filled in the first round due to non-receipt of nominations, and has been offered to the Group in the second subsequent rounds.
- vi. There should be clear process for handing over of the selection process matter between incoming and outgoing Chairs of different bodies, under supervision of the GC Chair. If there are any understandings, agreements reached between Members during the select process in a given year, either within their Regional Groups or between Groups, for future years, the same should be brought to the attention of the Members in a clear and transparent manner, with the cognisance of the GC Chair. Otherwise, such understandings are deemed to be null and void.

Conflict of interest

- vii. The RC's should NOT be nominating either themselves or their country delegates for Chairmanship of any Committees during their role as RC. If they wish to nominate themselves or their country delegates for Chairmanship/s during a particular year, then they need to recuse themselves of the RC role during that period.

Thank you Chair.

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