

**General Council Meeting
July 27-28, 2021**

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

Agenda Item 19: ‘Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration – Reports on the meetings of April, May, June and July 2021 (WT/BFA/194, WT/BFA/195, WT/BFA/196)’

We thank the CBFA chair for providing an update on the proceedings of CBFA meetings during April – July 2021. We wish to draw to Members’ attention an important issue emanating from those meetings. Chair, during FY 2020, the WTO has accumulated a surplus of CHF 11, 771, 979. The DG has proposed that an amount of CHF 9.8 million (amounting to 5% of the WTO budget) be adjusted against the Member contributions for 2022.

2. India supports this proposal by the Director General to pass on the savings realized during 2020 to the Members, by way of their reduced contributions for the next year. This proposal is in line with India’s suggestion made at the October 2020 General Council meeting last year for a voluntary cut in WTO’s budget in solidarity with Members battling the grave economic situation due to the ongoing pandemic.

3. The proposal by the Secretariat to pass on part of the 2020 savings to Members is a win-win for everyone. These saving were realized without the Secretariat having to cut-corners last year and its operations were not impacted. Passing on that benefit to Members to reduce their burden, even if it’s not significant, sends a positive message to the Membership and to the world that WTO is sensitive to the Members’ current economic situation brought on by the pandemic. Particularly, looking at the drop in GDP and revenue of respective countries, increase in debt and depreciation of currency, thereby resulting in higher contribution to the WTO in terms of local currency. This is precisely what our intention was when we made the proposal last year. The WTO certainly deserves credit for this gesture.

4. I take this opportunity to complement the DG for the proposal and call upon all Members to support it whole heartedly.

Thank you, Chair.
