

General Council Meeting
July 23-24, 2019

Statement by India

Agenda Item 9: An inclusive approach to transparency and notification requirements in the WTO – Communication from the African Group; Cuba; India and Oman (JOB/GC/218/Rev.1)

Thank you Chair. We associate ourselves with the statement delivered by South Africa on behalf of the African Group. Let me highlight some of the key elements of this joint submission by the African Group, Cuba and India.

- Our key motivation for this submission is to highlight the need for an inclusive cooperative and developmental agenda on transparency.
- We believe that transparency is an important pillar for effective functioning of the WTO. As enumerated in the paper, LDCs and developing countries have genuine capacity constraints in terms of institutional requirements and human resources to fulfill the onerous notification obligations.
- Delays in notifying cannot be attributed to willful non-compliance. Therefore, instead of punitive measures, we need to adopt an inclusive approach to incentivize the participation of LDCs and developing countries for complying with notification obligations.
- The other aspect which we need to consider is that transparency permeates all areas of our work in the WTO including processes of decision making in the organisation and the ministerial conferences. It should, therefore, be applied to our work including priorities in negotiations and deliberations in the various regular bodies. We also need to ensure that the processes are transparent, inclusive and provide opportunity for participation of all Members.
- Notification obligations cannot be seen in isolation only for certain areas related to goods. They should be applied holistically to all Agreements under the WTO. There are significant notification gaps which have been listed in the paper, in areas such as agriculture, services and TRIPS, where transparency needs to be strengthened.
- To conclude, in our view, the elements of a constructive approach on the issue of transparency and notifications in the WTO must include :
 - Recognizing the genuine capacity constraints which LDCs and developing countries face, and adopting a cooperative approach to address these.

- Our efforts should be to create a suitable eco system to strengthen the capacity of members by providing technical assistance, simplification of notification requirements and reducing the administrative and technical burden for delegations who do not have the resources and capacity.
- We should endeavour to promote transparency in all areas of our work including a participative process of decision making, setting the agenda of our negotiations and building faith and trust.
- Lastly, we again wish to reiterate that any approach suggesting a resort to counter notifications, additional obligations and punitive measures will only deepen the divide amongst members and we should rather focus on engaging in an inclusive and constructive approach to strengthen our work in this area.
