

**GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING
22-23 NOVEMBER, 2021**

STATEMENT BY INDIA: DELIEVED BY AMBASSADOR/PR TO THE WTO

AGENDA 22: APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS TO WTO BODIES

A. REPORT BY THE CHAIR

B. ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE CHAIR PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 7.1(A) OF THE GUIDELINES (WT/L/510)

Thank you Chair for your report and for your efforts to streamline the existing guidelines on appointment of officers.

2. During the consultations, we had conveyed our concerns on how 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 had 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 and we are happy to note from your statement today that some of those suggestions have been considered by you.

4. However, Chair, on the current **system of rotation**, we had suggested that 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. We note that this issued has not been addressed.

5. On **transparency**, we had requested at every stage of the selection process, there should be a clear-cut communication process both by the Chairs of concerned bodies and the Regional Coordinators (RC). We had requested that the RCs 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. While we note from your report the need for ensuring transparency, we do not see the details of how it will be ensured.

6. Also Chair, we had suggested that 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.

7. We had also requested that to avoid **conflict of interest**, 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.

8. While we see your report as positive step forward, it still falls short of our expectations and does not address all the concerns that we had raised over the issues that we had experienced during the selection process earlier this year.

9. Therefore, we request that these consultations may be carried forward and more detailed guidelines be put forward to make the system more transparent and efficient. We are willing to work on this, post MC-12 to reach a common understanding.

Thank you Chair.
