

Formal TNC and Informal HODs Meetings

3rd May, 2021

Statement by India – Delivered by Brajendra Navnit, Ambassador & PR to the WTO

Thank you Chair. Let me first congratulate you on your first TNC meeting.

I would like to convey my sincere thanks once again to you and all members for their kind words and support to India during this new wave of pandemic. India also stands with people of Chad and our sincere condolences for the departed soul.

Chair, I thank you for your report and the Chairs of the Negotiating Groups on Rules, Agriculture, Development and Services for their respective reports.

2. I would also like to thank you DG for urging the delegations to focus their discussions on the deliverables, their contribution and for a concrete approach on issues which may not be ready by MC12. We take your guidance in the right spirit. Now let me organise my thoughts according to the broad classifications you have suggested.

India would like to suggest that we must finalise issues ready for outcome in MC 12 latest by July end. In this regard your continuous engagements with members to have consensus based list of outcomes would be very helpful.

Deliverables for MC12 or even before that, like you have proposed for Fisheries negotiations:

Trade and Health

3. The proposal for **temporary waiver from certain provisions of TRIPS Agreement** is first on our priority list. To slow down the virus's ability to infect new people and mutate further, we need true global vaccination drive in a time bound manner, and the limited Waiver is an effective and pragmatic way to help in achieving it. An outcome on this will not only help in saving valuable human lives but will also give a comforting signal to boost the consumer confidence and will accelerate the recovery of global trade and world GDP.

4. We support efforts under the **Vaccine Equity initiative** that you are spearheading. While it focuses on a range of issues – IP, investment, R&D, manufacturing capacity, logistics, regulatory etc -, it should not delay the decision on the critical issue of IP barrier. Therefore, deliberations at the TRIPS Council on the Waiver should remain the prime focus to provide outcome before ministerial.

Movement of health care Professionals

5. The pandemic has highlighted the need for ensuring easier cross-border movement of health care workers and other professionals providing essential services. Members who could have been able to mobilize a greater number of such professionals, were not able to meet increased demand due to restrictive trade practices in Services sector. A multilateral framework on movement of professionals should be part of the MC-12 Trade & Health Package.

Public Stock Holding (PSH)

6. On agriculture, a simple, efficient, and **permanent solution on extending PSH for food security** purposes to new programs and new products should be a key deliverable at MC12. India is actively and constructively participating in the facilitator process. We believe any effort to meet the food security challenges must address the structural deficiencies including SSM.

Appellate Body

7. On dispute settlement, resolution of the crisis in the **Appellate Body** is another priority. We must immediately re-engage to restore the two-tier dispute resolution system, this needs to be achieved by MC12.

Fisheries negotiations

8. While we remain committed to delivering on **Fisheries negotiations**, I wish to reiterate that “common but differentiated responsibility” and “Polluter Pay’s principle” should be applicable in any agreement relating to sustainability. Those with large number of industrial vessels and have provided huge subsidies leading to overfishing and over capacity should take higher cuts in subsidy and capacity. S&DT in the final outcome must be effective and appropriate, having regard to the development needs, livelihood and food security concerns of millions of small fishers of developing countries including LDCs.

On E-commerce

9. First, we would like to thank General Council Chair for his consultations. The pandemic has further brought out the gaps on the digital capacities of the members. The need of the hour is to build capacity in areas such as digital skills and digital infrastructure, rather than negotiating binding rules on e-commerce. It is also important to **bring clarity on the scope, definition and impact of the moratorium on custom duty** on electronic transmission, its potential impact on the sustainability of the domestic industry and negative impact on job creation and

revenue generation. We need to **reinvigorate the mandated work under the 1998 Work Programme on e-commerce** in various Councils.

Contributions prepared to make

10. We are working on revised text of TRIPS Council proposal and engaging in bilateral consultations.
11. On e-commerce, we are working on bringing our submissions on Work Programme in respective councils.
12. On fisheries, we are agreeing to move forward with hybrid approach and
13. On agriculture, we are engaging in discussions with CoASS chair and facilitators.

Beyond MC12:

14. Among the issues that cannot be agreed by MC12 and require a definitive roadmap or a framework to carry forward the discussions we would suggest a **package/framework for WTO Reforms**. In this regard, we draw Members' attention to the document WT/GC/W/778/Rev 3 that India along with other co-sponsors have tabled at the GC in December 2020.

15. **A road-map for addressing G90 proposals** contained in the document JOB/TNC/79 are needed as well.

Other Issues:

16. Chair, we are deeply concerned by the attempts by some Members to bring in the **non-mandated issue of JSIs** as outcomes for MC12. We urge everyone to keep their attention focused only on delivering results on mandated issues.

17. I wish to conclude by saying that India stands ready to engage and work with other Members, to achieve definitive and balanced outcomes and make coming 8 months a success for all of us.

Thank you, Chair.
