

EU statement at Room W meeting on Nairobi, 6 November 2015

Statement by Ambassador Marc Vanheukelen

Chair,

Let me start out by joining in the thanks expressed by colleagues for the great efforts the facilitators and the DG are putting in to guide our work to a happy conclusion.

The discussion we are having today is tough one but also one that is very necessary. We should be honest to each other: sticking your head in the sand only offers short-lived comfort.

We cannot have a text on post-Nairobi that does not mention the major difficulties the WTO has been encountering and just say we continue 'business as usual'. On the principal items of the Doha agenda, market access and domestic support in agriculture, progress since the last fifteen years has basically been zero. Many countries, developing and developed, have come to the conclusion that it is more attractive to work on trade matters outside the multilateral process.

We need to have a credible message.

Accordingly, let me point out what the EU wants to see in the Ministerial Declaration's paragraphs on negotiations after this year.

- On DDA issues:
 - We are ready to endorse language in which Ministers agree to continue negotiations on the remaining DDA issues, but not a general reference to continuing the DDA as such.
 - The Declaration would desirably indicate that the immediate focus of efforts should be on those outstanding DDA issues which can only be negotiated effectively at multilateral level, such as domestic support and rules.
- On the question of how to advance on those DDA issues:
 - The Declaration needs to provide an opening to look at the outstanding DDA issues in new and creative ways. We need language on 'new approaches' or a readiness to 'explore new avenues' that could lead to progress on the remaining unaddressed issues of the DDA.
 - We should avoid language that would reaffirm Members' commitment to previous Ministerial Decisions or Declarations. Pursuing these old approaches would be a recipe for renewed failure.
 - We can however agree to the reconfirmation of some of the basic elements of the DDA mandate, such as flexibility or less-than-full-reciprocity.
 - Alternatively, we could agree to SDT language which follows a TF model, or as a third alternative, that



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developing country Members would undertake commitments in line with their prosperity and weight in international trade.

- On the question on new non-DDA issues:
 - The Ministerial Declaration needs as a minimum to recognise the right of WTO Members to bring their issues of concern to the organisation (regardless of whether they are covered by the DDA mandate or not) in order to start exploring them with a view to possible negotiations (either multilateral or in smaller groups). This last issue is for us a red line.