

EU statement at the WTO General Council meeting, 20/02/15

Statement by Ambassador Angelos Pangratis

1. REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE TRADE NEGOTIATIONS COMMITTEE

- I would firstly like others thank the TNC Chairman for his report and the Chairs of the negotiating sessions for their written reports.
- Indeed we have gone through a period of intensified discussions in various formats, which have proven to be enlightening in many respects. The path forward is becoming clearer step by step as we come to grips with each other's objectives and constraints in today's rapidly changing trading environment.
- What is clear is that every effort needs to be made to use effectively the momentum we have as the DG rightly said. The success of Bali has given the WTO another opportunity, perhaps its last, to come to a successful conclusion of the DDA, and it is our fundamental and collective responsibility not to miss this opportunity. In this context, we need to maintain the focus of our efforts on exploring what can be done and achieved today, and not on what we would have liked to get 14 years ago at the time of the Round's launch, or 7 years ago when we were so close to a deal.
- The EU for its part has been clear at each step on our scenario how we see negotiations unfolding and what would constitute reasonable outcomes in the DDA. We are ready to continue to look to creative solutions in all areas, as long as everyone else is willing to do the same. All of the core issues need to be taken forward in parallel and will have to achieve commensurate levels of ambition. Still, the EU accepts that agriculture may determine what will and won't be possible in the DDA overall, keeping in mind, however, that finally a balance will be needed within the agriculture pillar as between all the areas of a possible outcome.
- On the next steps, we agree with the DG that it is crucial at this stage that the necessary technical work is taken forward. The market access pillar – in both AG and NAMA - is a particular case in point. The need for a simpler, more realistic market



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access approach has been stressed by a large number of members during our conversations up until now. Clarity on options and instruments available here can only be useful for progressing on other issues. Services are another example and I welcome the approach outlined by the CTS-SS Chair earlier this week. Useful work on non-core issues like Rules and TRIPS could also move forward aiming at exploring what elements could realistically be part first of the Work Programme and then of a possible DDA outcome.

- Obviously, technical work will not be enough. I would like to re-emphasise the utmost importance of the horizontal part of the work, the testing of each other's scenarios, as the DG put it, which, under the circumstances, will necessarily play a central role in ensuring appropriate calibration between all areas and will help to guide the individual negotiating groups on the direction of work. Dealing with complex processes and tasks we express again our full confidence in the efforts of the Director General as he organises and facilitates the work on the parallel and complementary tasks he referred to in his report and we recognise the need of Members to do their part in that process too.
- Concluding, Mr Chairman, the first weeks of this year have shown that slowly but surely Members are beginning to open to the idea and to converge towards the need of exploring possible realistic solutions in all areas. This is the mind-set that we need in order to advance and to keep our July work-programme deadline as well as to see concrete results by MC10.