

EU statement at the Heads of Delegation Meeting, 09/05/16

Statement by Ambassador Marc Vanheukelen

- Thank you to the DG for your report and let me echo some of the points you made a moment ago, while also making some additional ones. We collectively achieved a major success in Nairobi which confirmed the interest of Members to seek solutions and outcomes that strengthen the multilateral trading system. With the mid-year point approaching, we need to however seriously start preparing the future.
- Over the last few months, we have all engaged in internal reflections regarding our expectations and priorities for post-Nairobi discussions. This was a useful and necessary exercise if we are to advance in our discussions.
- But the time for internal reflection is now up. We need to move from thinking to action, if we are to save this organisation from renewed drift and if we want to prepare good outcomes for the next Ministerial Conference.
- This may sound like a distant event at this point in time, but let there be no mistake, it is not.
- By the autumn of this year, we need to collectively have a clear idea of what we want to achieve in MC11 and what type of package to be preserved. Otherwise, we will once again be struggling with the timetable. This picture does not have to be very detailed, but it does have to answer the fundamental question of whether we make an effort to strive for an ambitious outcome covering one or more core negotiating areas or if we aim for something much smaller.
- The European Union is clearly a supporter of the first option and we are ready to engage in the coming weeks and months to start working out how to advance on some of the most important areas of negotiations that remain outstanding. This is in particular the case for agricultural domestic support, which the vast majority of Members see as long overdue for an outcome and which is closely linked and will have to take account of another issue of interest to some Members: public stockholdings for food security purposes.
- There are, however also other prospective areas that need to be considered from among the outstanding issues. We have already seen some interest in domestic regulation in services, in transparency and good regulatory practices, and in horizontal subsidies and fisheries subsidies. These discussions need to continue.
- At the same time, the Nairobi Ministerial Declaration clearly recognises that there are other areas of work that are of interest to WTO Members. The European Union is happy to see that some bottom-up efforts are already starting to explore what these issues are, where are the gaps in the existing rulebook, what is their development dimension and how best they can be advanced.
- These exploratory discussions need to accelerate as part of our preparations for MC11.



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- How we collectively organise our discussions over the coming months will determine our chances of success. Bottom-up initiatives across all areas of discussions are highly called for.
- At the same time, we believe you, Director General, are the only one who can bring all of these efforts together into a coordinated attempt to prepare the outlines of our ambitions for the next Ministerial Conference and we therefore call on you to redouble your efforts to help Members advance the post Nairobi process.