

# WTO Trade Negotiations Committee, 6 February 2014

## *Statement by EU Ambassador Angelos Pangratis*

In this first meeting of 2014, I want to join others and thank our Indonesian friends excellent hosts of MC9 and thank you DG for your much appreciated contribution to the success in Bali.

I also want to thank you for your report of today and your pertinent comments on the way forward.

The 9<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference is rightly seen as a very important success for the organisation. We collectively made a remarkable effort, in fact since MC8, to pull the WTO's negotiation agenda away from a very dangerous cliff. Under your energetic guidance Chair we succeeded in Bali and now we must build on this success and take this organisation forward in a convincing way.

The Bali ministerial declaration provides us with a clear direction regarding the work to be done.

First among our priorities is clearly the implementation of all Bali outcomes that you presented in a quite comprehensive way Chair. We of course will actively support the implementation work on all areas you mentioned. I want only to refer briefly here in particular to the completion of the Trade Facilitation agreement which will function as a test of Members commitment and resolve to move forward.

We now have limited time to complete the legal scrubbing, agree on the protocol and finalise the scheduling of commitments. All eyes will be on the WTO during this period and we should not disappoint.

The EU and its Members States are the leading providers of Trade Facilitation assistance and stand ready to support developing countries in their effort to implement the agreement. As we are currently in the process of programming this assistance for the next years, I would like to urge again our partners to prioritise in an appropriate way Trade Facilitation projects already now before entry into force of the agreement.

The other priority that we must collectively address is to put in order the WTO's negotiating agenda. The work programme discussion will provide a good opportunity to set out a clear path forward. This process is certainly going to be very challenging for obvious reasons and will require the positive commitment of all and each one in order to succeed.

I will make only a few clearly non exhaustive comments on your 6 parameters Chair.



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First, it is fundamentally important that all WTO Members remain realistic as to what and when, something can or cannot be achieved. Following many years of negotiations, we should avoid repeating the mistakes of the past. We should avoid the risk of falling into the same trap that has haunted us for the last decade. Defining a realistically doable work programme by the end of the year can be the most important step of our long term effort to restore fully the negotiating function of the WTO.

It is equally important to keep in mind as you said the interconnection of the various DDA issues. The DDA was conceived with an inherent internal balance between agriculture, non-agriculture, market access and services which remains an important consideration for the discussion ahead of us. We need to fully factor this into our thinking from the outset and build on it.

The changes that have occurred in the global trade environment since the Round's launch in 2001 mean that a serious discussion is needed to identify areas where negotiations can be pursued while sustaining an appropriate balance among them and at the same time ensuring that genuine results are achieved for the poorest WTO members.

Development must of course continue to be at the core of the DDA. This however does not mean a one size fits all approach. Every members needs to contribute to the common efforts in line with each economic potential.

What does all of this mean in practice? Translating these parameters into concrete actions will be a difficult task, but it is not insurmountable.

The first step that is clearly needed and the key to further progress is to ensure that the changes that have occurred in the international landscape are properly reflected in the data that are used as the basis for negotiations. It would therefore be important to pay particular attention to the need for appropriate and updated statistical information regarding trade flows and subsidies, as without such updated information, it will not be possible to move forward in a substantive and realistic way.

With regard to the individual issues to be covered by the work programme, we need to be cautious and exercise from the beginning self-restraint. We already have a negotiating mandate and we do not have to repeat all of its details.

We equally need to avoid falling into the trap of detailed discussions on process, which would keep us away from the substantive work that needs to be done.

Bali and the process that led to it, particularly the building of a real convergence among members, in a solidly pragmatic and realistic step by step way, that resulted into an eminently doable Bali package can give us some valuable indications of what should be done now. On the other hand, the negative experience that led us to recognise the impasse in MC8, can teach us a lot about what we should avoid.

Chair, dear colleagues, we surprised the world in December by showing in Bali that progress is possible and that the WTO can deliver again; the interest of the WTO and of all of us lies in continuing in this positive spirit, implementing efficiently our ministers decisions and moving the negotiating agenda forward in a way that is solidly and from the beginning realistic and doable.

The time that we have is short and the tasks involved clearly challenging but overall we have a tremendous opportunity in front of us to put the multilateral system back into its due place.

Thank you Chair.