

**Informal Gathering of Ministers on WTO
Davos, Switzerland
26 January 2018
Statement Delivered by Mr. J.S. Deepak, Ambassador &
Permanent Representative of India to the WTO**

1. We thank the Swiss Government for hosting this meeting. I also thank the DG WTO for his update on the state of play at the WTO.
2. The 11th Ministerial Conference of the WTO concluded without substantive outcomes including on mandated issues. However, there was a great deal of transparency and inclusiveness in the process. Going forward, we will continue to work with full vigor to achieve consensus-based outcomes in the future at the WTO.
3. We have no doubt that the path of multilateralism, as embodied in the WTO can be the incoming tide that could lift all boats and benefit all Members. But it faces some significant challenges today, with some of us questioning the agreed way forward. The members of this institution have the responsibility of addressing these challenges and putting it back on a steady and meaningful way forward. India is keen to re-invigorate negotiations in the WTO and to use this forum to develop rules that will be beneficial to all its Members, building on work done and decisions made in the past.
4. The first step in this direction has to be building confidence and establishing mutual trust among the WTO membership, which unfortunately has been eroded over the years. The principles of non-discrimination, predictability, transparency and, most importantly, the commitment to development, underlying the multilateral trading system, are too valuable to lose.
5. At MC-11, we heard different views among the membership on the linkages between trade and development. Attempts are being made to curtail the development dimension of trade and trade rules. India is of the firm belief that preserving the special and differential treatment for all developing and least developed countries is important.
6. Turning to some of the new issues that are sought to be introduced into the negotiating agenda of the WTO, in India's view these must first be discussed in detail. If negotiations in these areas are to begin it should be by consensus.

7. Let me also take this opportunity to express India's concern at the inordinate delay in appointment of new members to the Appellate Body. We need to collectively and expeditiously resolve this impasse collectively strive to preserve and revitalize the dispute settlement pillar of the WTO.

8. As you may know, India is hosting a mini-Ministerial meeting on 19-20 March 2018. We are very keen to see a forward movement in the WTO which, India believes, is the best available institution to ensure a predictable and transparent system of rule-making in the area of international trade. Plurilateral agreements can, at best, complement the multilateral trading system. They cannot be a substitute for it. Nor can free trade agreements. Many critical issues, for example, agricultural domestic support, are not a part of such agreements.

9. We hope to facilitate at this Ministerial a free and frank exchange of views on the agenda for WTO negotiations in Geneva as well as institutional issues and any other theme of common interest.

10. In conclusion, I would like to say that the multilateral trading system is our collective responsibility and we all have a stake in it. We must find a way to successfully address conflicting interests, motives and ideologies, in order to preserve and strengthen this valuable institution. I assure you of India's positive contribution to the future deliberations at the WTO.

Thank you.
