

**General Council Meeting
October 13, 2020**

Statement by India – Delivered by Ambassador & PR to the WTO

Agenda Item 8: ‘Procedural guidelines for WTO councils and committees addressing trade concerns – Statement by Co-Sponsors of WT/GC/W/777/Rev.5’

1. India thanks the European Union and other proponents for the draft General Council Decision on “Procedural guidelines for WTO councils and committees addressing trade concerns as contained in the document WT/GC/W/777/Rev.5.”

2. We support the need for a mechanism to address specific trade concerns effectively and in that regard, the proposal to improve the meeting procedures of the WTO bodies. Proposals such as indicative yearly schedules of meetings for each of the WTO bodies; timely circulation of the agenda and the minutes of the meetings; and strengthening of the existing processes are welcome.

3. A pre-requisite for efficient Committees’ work is Members’ compliance with their transparency obligations. It is natural to expect that the track record of the main votaries of enhanced transparency such as EU would be nothing short of exemplary in complying with their existing notification obligations. But we find that the EU has still not submitted its DS:1 notification for the marketing year 2018-19, well past the deadline of 30 September 2019 by when they should have notified this information according to the deadlines mandated in document G/AG/2. A delay of more than a year! The EU was also late by a period of almost 19 months in notifying their DS:1 notification for the marketing year 2017-18. It is also disappointing to note that specific trade concerns concerning the EU’s policy related to MRLs and endocrine disruptors have remained on the agenda of the SPS Committee for several years together.

4. Chair, these are just the tip of the iceberg. It is not our intention to point fingers at any member, but our expectation that members practice what they preach. We would encourage the EU and other members to lead by example and ensure that they fulfil their existing transparency obligations before proposing to add an ever-growing list of new obligations, and chastising other members.

5. The proposal is still being examined in our capital. In the earlier GC meetings, we have already expressed our concerns over certain aspects of the proposal. For the sake of brevity, I am not reiterating them today again.

6. We thank the EU delegation for their engagement on this proposal with us. We look forward to continuing these discussions and our constructive engagement on this matter.

7. I thank you, Chair.
