

## **Informal TNC and HODs Meetings**

**4<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

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

Thank you Chair and good afternoon colleagues. I thank the DG, GC Chair, Chairs of the negotiating groups and Ambassador Dacio for their respective reports.

2. Chair, as you said, we have an important task in hand to pragmatically assess where we are on the deliverables for MC12 given the unprecedented crisis that we continue to face and whether these deliverables are balanced and address the needs of the developing Members, including the least developed Members.

#### **MC12:**

3. Chair, our topmost priority should be revival of economy and sustain the growth post pandemic and during a conflict situation. The present situation has got a new imported problem. We are here in the WTO so let me use that very imported problems for most of the economies today and that problem is the increasing inflation in most of the domestic economy. These are getting transmitted through food, fertiliser and fuel crisis and it is going to devastate the economy. It is going to wipe out a lot of gains which were made before pandemic notwithstanding the pandemic. For MC12, we think that WTO has a role to play to take care of these imported problems. We are looking forward to a successful Ministerial that will deliver on both on the critical issues confronting the world today i.e. the current food crisis and the ongoing pandemic as well as long pending mandated issues which we have in our hands. Time is short and we should try to close as many deliverables as possible before MC12 in coming five weeks, so that we do not overburden our Ministers with the negotiating agenda during the Ministerial itself. We look forward to a consensus-based Ministerial Declaration and, therefore, we do not favour or support the Chair's text which was mentioned by Ambassador Didier.

#### **Food Security:**

4. On food security, Chair, it has emerged as a major challenge, both on account of the pandemic and the ongoing conflict. It is important that this Organisation makes a significant contribution to the global efforts to tackle the current secret food security challenge during MC12. We need to look at the existing constraints in Agreement on Agriculture and I know when I say that a lot of people will be very unhappy that I am trying to find to push my PSH agenda here through backdoor even at the cost of getting victimised or names called out. I must repeat that we need to look at the existing constraints in the Agreement on Agriculture, that are coming in the way of augmenting supplies during this crisis. And we know that there is no other substitute than augmenting the global supply at this moment. As our Prime Minister said, and I quote, 'India is ready to supply

food stocks to the world if WTO can find a way out from the existing constraints, under Agreement on Agriculture'. Therefore, India appeals to the Members that we need to find ways and means to support the efforts of Members who are in a position to help others through distributions from their stocks during the current food crisis. And we should not link this in any manner to the ongoing deadlock in negotiations in the agricultural sector on WTO's response to pandemic which includes both IP and non-IP agenda.

### **WTO's Response to the Pandemic:**

5. Chair, we thank Ambassador Dacio for Facilitator role and his report and my delegation has engaged in wide ranging discussions on the various possibilities for new formulations. Our position is very clear that any Declaration, whatever be its format, must reflect the various viewpoints. The painstaking work that has been done must not be lost. In that context, the focus should be on the content. A streamlining of various formulations is something which we can work towards, as long as the overall text remains balanced between various viewpoints.

6. On outcome on TRIPS waiver, though it still remains in the opinion of a few Members that it is still not achievable. But we think that it remains for us an integral part of the response to pandemic and one of key deliverables for MC12. And in this regard, we note the communications shared by you to the TRIPS Chair yesterday. For us, an outcome on this proposal needs to be immediately doable, practical and one that ensures security of supply and equitable and affordable access. Chair, I hope that going forward in these discussions despite the divergences, Members will engage in good faith to achieve an effective outcome on this critical issue based on the text-based negotiation in TRIPS Council.

### **Agriculture:**

7. On Agriculture, Chair, we are disappointed to note that significant divergences remain across all pillars of negotiations, irrespective of some people saying that it is only that divergence is only in public stockholding and not in others, but our understanding is different in this matter. Chair, any outcome on MC12 should include a simple, efficient and permanent solution on extending Public Stock Holding for food security purposes, to new programmes and new products. Any outcome without addressing this core issue, which is overdue for years, will not enhance WTO's credibility. We always remember 2020 as the deadline for fisheries negotiations, but we forget the deadline for permanent solution to public stockholding, which was three years before that was 2017.

### **Fisheries Subsidies:**

8. On fishery subsidies, Chair, while we appreciate the Chair's efforts in moving the discussions forward during the last week, and particularly taking up the issue of a Special & Differential Treatment, but we are not sure of the process he has embarked upon and the process of collecting information through a questionnaire from Ambassadors in their personal capacities. We find this

approach quite problematic in a multilateral setting. We are not attending a statistical class, and I know that how samplings can be played around with by choosing 50 Members of my choice and depicting something on the screen. Ambassadors at the WTO are not here in their private capacities. They are representatives of their respective governments. Hence, their personal opinion does not matter. In the negotiation process, certain data inferences have been made today on the screen. Based on these personal opinions, this approach is grossly erroneous. Further, it is unclear how the samplings were done, which Members were called for, for these bilaterals and the criteria used to select 50 Members. Lack of transparency in the process can lead us nowhere, if any, it will only create mistrust and confusion. The whole process, therefore, to us lacks credibility, and hence this report cannot be taken cognizance of. Here, we may recall that in response to an earlier version of the text that was 276 Rev 1, around 86 Members during the July TNC meeting at the Ministerial level has stated that the just text is not sufficient and does not reflect the interests of all Members. And under Special & Differentiated treatment, the situation remains the same. We are willing to engage our endeavour endeavour should be to produce a text based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. The big subsidises and developed countries responsible for the present state of marine resources, so take greater responsibility to reduce their subsidies and fishing capacities. Our position on Article V is reflected in our submission in RD/TN/RL/147. We have demanded that full discussion should be held on a Sunday at distant water fishing at the technical level and should not be left for political discussion at Minister's level.

### **WTO Reforms:**

9. Lastly Chair, on WTO reforms, India supports the WTO reform agenda premised on strengthening the fundamental principles of the WTO including consensus-based decision making, non-discrimination, Special & Differential Treatment premised on the principles of inclusivity and development.

10. Finally, let me reiterate that we should strive for a balanced outcomes at Ministerial that will truly reflect of the multilateral character of this organisation and will ensure that WTO is seen as a part of the solutions to the global challenges and not a mere spectator.

Thank you, Chair.

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