

Aid for Trade in Asia and the Pacific Promoting Connectivity for Inclusive Development

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Update on WTO's Eleventh Ministerial Conference – Implications for the Pacific Region

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Context



- The eleventh WTO Ministerial Conference (MC11) took place against a difficult economic and political context.
- Preparatory Geneva Process highlighted significant differences between Members on substantive and procedural issues.
- A number of decisions were reached, notably on fisheries subsidies.

What did the Pacific request? Group Statement at Plenary Session



Lautafi Fio Selafi Purcell,
Minister of Commerce, Samoa

- Reaffirmed importance of multilateral system and open, transparent and predictable system.
- Need to make system more equitable for SIDS and ensure SVEs are not left behind.
- Disappointment at failure to address G90 development proposals.
- Concerns about questioning of link between trade and development, and failure to complete DDA.
- Importance of post-Buenos Aires process.

Pacific Group Statement (continued)



- Urged bridging of differences and disciplining of most destructive subsidies (Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing and subsidies to overfished stocks.
- Appropriate S&D to enable SIDS fully develop fisheries resources.
- Preserve rights of coastal states to resources, appropriate transition periods and implementation assistance.



Papua New Guinea



- Papua New Guinea has one third of the world's tuna; the fish that feeds the world.

- “We are vitally interested in seeing the achievement of multilateral agreements that will eliminate IUU fishing and that includes the abolition of subsidies to fishing industries by large economies”.



Wera MORI, Minister, Papua New Guinea

Vanuatu

- The sea and ocean that surround Vanuatu and the Pacific Islands teem with fisheries resources that we consume and trade.
- Our fisheries resources are at risk with IUU fishing.
- Bigger countries overfish in our waters.
- Larger countries come into our seas and ocean with large capacity fishing vessels that unsustainably harvest our fish.

“The rules-based multilateral trading system is a force for good that would help all of us to trade to alleviate poverty and attain economic development.”



Roline Lesines TEKON, Acting Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vanuatu

What issues were discussed at Buenos Aires ?



- Fisheries Subsidies.
- Trade in Agriculture Permanent Solution on Public Stockholding for Food Security Purposes.
- Trade in Services (Domestic Regulation).
- Development (Special & Differential Treatment).
- Electronic Commerce.

MC11: Agriculture Negotiations - I



- Some results achieved at MC10 : e.g. elimination of export subsidies.
- Domestic Support: wide differences of views persist.

MC11: Agriculture Negotiations - II



MC11
BUENOS AIRES
2017

- Public Stockholding for food security purposes (PSH)
- Members could not meet the deadline to agree on a permanent solution.
- Differences on transparency provisions and safeguards clause.



MC11: Services Domestic Regulation

- Since MC10, a revival of negotiations on GATS domestic regulation disciplines.
- Some expressed strong reservations on necessity, scope and right to regulate.
- At MC11, Members could not agree on a decision.



MC11: Special and Differential Treatment - I



- Broad acceptance of the centrality of development in WTO work. Significant divergences of perspective and how it should be addressed.
- Some Members consider that WTO rules contribute to trade-led growth and development, others feel that these rules constrain development objectives. Others want to link commitments to capacity to implement.
- G-90 proposals to promote industrialization, diversification and structural transformation.
- No agreement on substance or process prior to MC11
- Ministerial discussions were held at MC11 but no agreement forthcoming.
- Need for a fresh approach suggested.

MC11: Special and Differential Treatment - II



- MC11 discussion highlighted ideas and suggestions.
- Fact-based dialogue through specific case-studies.
- Standing item in the CTD.
- Monitoring mechanism.
- With a needs-driven and evidence-base approach.

MC11 Decisions

FISH



- Decision on Fisheries Subsidies (WT/MIN(17)/64 / WT/L/1031)
 - ... an agreement on comprehensive and effective disciplines that prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, and eliminate subsidies that contribute to IUU-fishing by 2019.
 - ... recognize that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing country Members and least developed country Members should be an integral part of these negotiations.



MC11 Decisions - II

- Work Programme on Electronic commerce (WT/MIN(17)/65 / WT/L/1032)
 - ...agree to continue the work under the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce.
 - ... General Council to hold periodic reviews in its sessions of July and December 2018 and July 2019.
 - ... report to the next session of the Ministerial Conference based on reports from relevant WTO bodies.



- TRIPS non-violation and situation complaints (WT/MIN(17)/66 / WT/L/1033).
- Work Programme on Small Economies (WT/MIN(17)/63 / WT/L/1030).

MC11: Other Issues



- Declarations of groups of Members on Investment Facilitation, E-commerce, MSMEs.
- Common element: the establishment of open Working Groups, with a view to securing multilateral outcomes.
- Declaration on Women & Trade
- Additional Ministerial Declarations

MC11: Declaration on Women and Trade



1. Sharing our respective experiences relating to policies and programs to encourage women's participation in trade
2. Sharing best practices for conducting gender-based analysis of trade policies
3. Sharing methods and procedures for the collection of gender-disaggregated data, indicators
4. Working together in the WTO to remove barriers for women's economic empowerment
5. Ensuring that Aid for Trade supports tools and know-how for analysing, designing and implementing more gender-responsive trade policies.

Next Steps



- Fisheries – MC12 deadline
- E-commerce Work Programme
- Issues Members decide to advance
- Aid for Trade
- Regular WTO work

“There is life after Buenos Aires”

- Minister Susana Malcorra, Chair of MC11



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