

Informal Ministerial Meeting on the WTO
Paris, 2 June 2016

Chair's Summary of Discussion

Ministers and officials from more than 30 Members, representing a broad spectrum of the WTO membership met in Paris on 2 June 2016 with the WTO Director General to assess the post-Nairobi situation in the WTO. The focus was on what outcomes Members want to achieve by the next Ministerial Conference in 2017 and beyond, and how to develop convergence on such outcomes.

Ministers stressed the importance of implementing the Nairobi and Bali outcomes and exploring ways to advance negotiations to build on those outcomes in the period ahead.

Ministers underlined that it is important that the WTO's negotiating function continue to deliver meaningful outcomes. In addition, Ministers discussed the need to find ways to update the multilateral trading system in line with developments in the global economy. In this context, the importance of engagement with business and other stakeholders was highlighted.

Ministers heard the Director-General stressing that political backing at the ministerial level is essential — now, throughout discussions in Geneva, and in the lead-up to the next Ministerial Conference. Ministers agreed to play a constructive role in revitalizing and strengthening the WTO's negotiating function. To find convergence will require meeting at different levels, in different groupings and in different places. The process must be inclusive and transparent.

Ministers acknowledged a positive change in the tone of discussions among members, while noting a level of uncertainty on how to proceed with negotiations.

Although there were differences in emphasis and priorities, there was a strong political commitment to finding ways to make the WTO's negotiating function work effectively and deliver results for the whole Membership. Development, in particular for the Least Developed Countries, remains at the core.

Ministers agreed with the Director-General's assessment that it was now time to move from reflection to action and that this transition should be driven through a proposal-driven process aimed at securing outcomes by MC11 and beyond. Some Ministers signaled their intentions of putting forward concrete proposals, which was noted as positive.

Many Ministers acknowledged the need to be realistic, look for doable and meaningful result, and be open to new approaches to get there.

In this regard, Ministers mentioned a number of issues, including both Doha and non-Doha topics i.a. domestic support and the mandated permanent solution for public stockholding for food security purposes, fishery subsidies, agriculture, NAMA, rules and services, the whole range of development issues, including cotton, e-commerce, investment and Small and Medium sized Enterprises.

Argentina advised that it is offering to host the next WTO Ministerial Conference.