

WTO Heads of Delegations Meeting, 25 July 2017 / General Council, 26 July 2017

Communication from Albania; Argentina; Australia; Bangladesh; Benin; Canada; Chile; Colombia; Costa Rica; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; El Salvador; Ghana; Guatemala; Hong Kong, China; Iceland; Israel; Kazakhstan; Republic of Korea; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Liechtenstein; Malaysia; Mexico; Montenegro; Moldova; Myanmar; New Zealand; Nigeria; Norway; Pakistan; Panama; Papua New Guinea; Paraguay; Qatar; Russian Federation; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Switzerland; Chinese Taipei; Thailand; The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Tonga; Turkey; Ukraine; Uruguay; Vanuatu; Viet Nam.

1. We, a group of 47 developing and developed Members, are strongly supportive of the Multilateral Trading System and are concerned that the WTO is facing challenges.
2. In recent months, Members have submitted ideas and proposals both on longstanding negotiating issues and other topics as part of the preparatory process for the 11th Ministerial Conference (MC11) in Buenos Aires. However, to date, the political will to find compromises and to forge consensus is lacking. Even the legitimacy of discussing topics of interest to Members has been put into question.
3. Other important functions of the WTO are also facing challenges. *Inter alia*, compliance with notification obligations is often unsatisfactory, thereby undermining the WTO's monitoring function; and various issues are affecting the functioning of the WTO's dispute settlement system.
4. We call on Members to safeguard the integrity of the open, rules-based Multilateral Trading System embodied in the WTO and to work together to ensure its sound functioning. The WTO continues to be essential to achieving inclusive and sustainable global growth and development, including through the further integration of LDCs into world trade. MC11 presents an important opportunity to reaffirm the centrality of the WTO.
5. We welcome the commitment from the recent G-20 Summit in Hamburg to make MC11 a success. We urge Members to engage constructively, to consider proposals on their own merit, and to work towards pragmatic outcomes. It will be important that Ministers provide political guidance on outcomes for MC11, including on the WTO's future work.
