

Informal WTO Ministerial Gathering, Paris, 23 May 2019

Summary of the co-Chairs, Australia and Canada

In concluding this Informal World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Gathering, we would like to summarize the discussions as follows:

Ministers and senior officials from 32 WTO Members, representing a broad spectrum of the WTO membership, and the WTO Director-General, met in Paris on 23 May 2019 to discuss how to advance work on fisheries subsidies and to progress WTO reform and negotiating outcomes for MC12.

Ministers recognised 2019 as a crucial year for the multilateral trading system and resolved to strengthen the WTO's role in governing global trade, in line with contemporary realities.

Ministers emphasised the need to engage in a flexible, solution-finding mode in order to conclude the fisheries subsidies negotiations by the deadline of December 2019. Ministers agreed on the need to move to intensive text-based negotiations without delay, and focus on flexible, compromise approaches. A number of Ministers noted the importance of complying with the 30 June deadline to submit subsidy notifications.

Ministers also highlighted the need to work towards concrete outcomes for MC12, both in terms of WTO reform initiatives and negotiations. Many highlighted agricultural reform as an essential outcome for MC12. A number of Ministers welcomed progress on electronic commerce, services domestic regulation and investment facilitation, and affirmed the need for such initiatives to be transparent and inclusive. Ministers also acknowledged the importance of addressing trade and development issues.

Numerous interventions underlined the importance of improving transparency and notifications compliance.

Ministers also emphasised the need to resolve the Appellate Body impasse without delay.

The Director-General urged Members to show flexibility in order to overcome divisions and encouraged further engagement and solution-finding approaches to address current challenges and help strengthen the WTO.