

WTO Workshop on Environmental Goods and Services

23 September 2009

Harsha V. Singh, Deputy Director General

Opening Remarks

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen. It is my pleasure to welcome you to this Workshop on Environmental Goods and Services. A special welcome to those of you who have come from far. I hope that discussions during this Workshop will be productive and useful for all of you.

Let me start my opening remarks by situating this Workshop in the broader context of the WTO negotiations. Under the Doha Round's environmental chapter, Members are exploring ways to accelerate trade opening in environmentally friendly goods and services and therefore facilitate access to key environment technologies.

The market for green goods and services has experienced significant growth in recent years. The development of green industries will be an important element of the recovery from recession and, in fact, a significant part of the stimulus packages is set aside for green investment. This highlights today's relevance of the negotiations on environmental goods and services. Trade data is also telling: in 2007, world exports of goods that are listed in the convergence set submitted by several Members in the Committee on Trade and Environment Special Session (CTESS) amounted to more than US\$750 billion. Reducing or eliminating import tariffs and non-tariff barriers in environmental products will reduce their price and make them more accessible. Increased competition will foster technological innovation in areas related to protection of the environment.

In these negotiations, it is of course vital to bear in mind that while there is an important trade dimension, there is an equally important environmental one. Indeed, past years' discussions in the CTESS have demonstrated that environmental goods can cover a number of key technologies that may contribute positively to environmental protection. The negotiations have the potential to have a positive impact on various environment problems, such as air quality, water, soil and natural resources conservation and also to help improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

A successful outcome of the negotiations on environmental goods and services could therefore deliver a triple-win for WTO members: a win for the environment, a win for trade and also a win for development.

The purpose of this Workshop is to help Members deepen their understanding of issues arising under the mandate of Paragraph 31(iii) of the Doha Ministerial Declaration, including development related aspects, without prejudice to ongoing negotiations in the CTESS.

We are lucky to have today with us experts from various horizons: from governments, the private sector and international organizations with impressive expertise in the area of Environmental Goods and Services. I'm convinced that we will have an interactive exchange among delegations and experts on key issues of relevance to the CTESS mandate.

The first part of the workshop will attempt to provide an overview of key Environmental Goods and Services categories, namely: Renewable Energy, with a particular focus on Wind and Solar Energy; Solid and Hazardous Waste Management; Water and Waste Water Treatment; and Air Pollution Control and Environmental Technologies. While introducing their sector, speakers are invited to address a number of key questions such as: What are some of the goods and technologies of particular importance under this category? What are their environmental benefits? What

characterizes trade in this sector? What are the market drivers at the country and/or international level? What is the potential for growth in that sector? What has been the role of supportive policy measures in promoting market deployment, production and exports? What are the main non tariff barriers (NTBs) faced by exporters and how can they be overcome?

The second part of the workshop will be dedicated to ways to improve access to green goods and technologies, and especially the issue of technology transfer. Speakers are invited to present their perspective on the particular needs of developing countries in this regard and to discuss concrete actions that may contribute to building domestic capacity of developing country Members with respect to green goods and services. The session will address some of the main drivers of technology transfer in relation to specific examples of environmentally sound technologies.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all speakers and discussants who have joined us today. We are very grateful that you have come to share your knowledge and experience in various environmental goods and technologies. I believe the information we gather today will be useful to deepen delegations' understanding of these technologies and sectors. I also hope that it will provide valuable background for the next phase of work in the Committee on Trade and Environment Special Session, which will involve a more substantive examination of the different sectors and technologies.

With that, I declare the Workshop on Environmental Goods and Services open, and I look forward to interactive and fruitful discussions. I wish you a successful Workshop and, for those of you who are visiting, a pleasant stay here in Geneva. I thank you for your attention.
