

**DEDICATED SESSION OF THE COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN SERVICES –  
REVIEW OF THE OPERATION OF PREFERENCES NOTIFIED  
UNDER THE LDC SERVICES WAIVER**

**29 OCTOBER 2019**

**CLOSING REMARKS BY H.E. MR GEERT MUYLLE, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BELGIUM TO  
THE WTO, CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR TRADE IN SERVICES**

"I will not attempt to provide a summary of the workshop – it would not do justice to the rich and diverse presentations and contributions that were made today.

Let me just make a few observations that I have gleaned from the discussions today:

- LDC Services trade presents only a small portion of overall trade, and their exports are concentrated in few sectors. Little data is available where LDC exports flow, but indications are that services trade flows possibly often also regionally, and not only South- North.
- Obstacles to services trade are many, and arise from a variety of sources – both foreign and domestic. We need to understand them better to help us address them.
- Access barriers in services are often higher than for goods trade. Also, information about market opportunities is often incomplete or lacking.
- The enabling environment for services supply in LDCs is also important, both for exports and for local access to services for local users, and for access to services as inputs in other economic activity. Improving regulatory capacity was mentioned as an issue of particular importance.
- Assistance in services development assistance should feature more prominently in Aid for Trade programmes was an important take-away.
- We heard about a range of Capacity Building interventions supporting services supply. It is important to embed them in national services development strategies. Several speakers have pointed to the importance of situating services development strategies into overall development plans.
- As digitalization permeates the supply of all services, assistance to bridge the digital gap is of cross-cutting importance.

This is very rough sketch of what has been discussed today. I hope the participants found the deliberations as interesting as I did. The challenge for all of us is to digest the information and to reflect on the possible contribution of the WTO in increasing the participation of LDCs in services trade."

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