

Lamy opens stocktaking week with hope for strong signal on concluding the Round

22 March 2010

TRADE NEGOTIATIONS COMMITTEE

Director-General Pascal Lamy expressed the hope at the Trade Negotiations Committee meeting on 22 March 2010 that after the senior officials' stocktaking of the Doha Round at the end of the week, "we will be able to send a strong signal to the outside world and focus the political energy that is needed to move the Round into the concluding phase".

Before turning to the first item of business at our meeting today I would like to say a few words on how I see the organization of this week so as to facilitate the work of delegations and ensure that a maximum degree of transparency and inclusiveness is maintained.

As indicated in my fax to delegations on 12 March I see this week as consisting of three modules, if you wish. The First Module, i.e. today's TNC, is intended to serve as a platform for the Negotiating Chairs to provide the membership with their reports — written as well as oral — on the state-of-play in each of their negotiating areas. Today's meeting, including the reports from the Chairs, is above all intended to provide participants with a transparent basis for further reflection over the next few days, rather than an occasion for detailed responses. In line with this approach, I do not intend to provide you with a lengthy Chairman's report today.

Of course, the floor will be open for comments following all of the reports, but I would very much hope to be able to adjourn this meeting fairly early this morning to allow for the Second Module of this week to begin namely consultations among yourselves. As indicated in my fax I will also be meeting and consulting with participants in a range of formats and configurations over the next few days, including a Green Room on the afternoon of Thursday 25 March.

On Friday, 26 March, we will then re-convene in this formal TNC format, i.e. Module Three, to provide participants with the opportunity to wrap up this stocktaking and express their views. I will, of course, provide you with my impressions of the week's activities and I hope that we will collectively get a sense of gaps remaining, the size of these gaps and the dynamic with which to address them. It is my hope that on the basis of our exchange of views on Friday we will be able to send a strong signal to the outside world and focus the political energy that is needed to move the Round into the concluding phase.

This is broadly how I see this week's activities unfolding and I hope I can count on your

cooperation to allow us to proceed as smoothly and efficiently as possible.

Agenda item 1

We will now turn to the first item on our agenda, my introductory statement.

As indicated earlier, I intend to provide you with a full statement on Friday morning after I have had an opportunity to evaluate the activities of this week. Today I want only to emphasize that many eyes are on us this week. We are responding to the call of Ministers when they met at the 7th WTO Ministerial Conference last December. The signal that we are able to send from this week, this stocktaking, will be closely watched by a broader world community, not just by trade negotiators. This is anything but a bureaucratic exercise. I urge you to approach this week with serenity and determination as well as the unity of purpose which will allow us to take the next steps towards concluding the Round.

Let me also say a few words about our process here in Geneva. If we have learned something since 2008 it is that a Geneva-based process must remain at the core of the negotiation centred on the negotiating groups led by the Chairs. This is vital to ensure the full participation and informed decision making we all want.

Agenda item 2

I suggest we now turn to our second agenda item, which is reports by Chairpersons of the bodies established by the TNC.

These reports will be circulated following this meeting.

I would now like to open the floor to the Chairs.

The Chairman would invite the Chairpersons to take the floor:

- Amb. Walker (New Zealand), Special Session of the Committee on Agriculture
- Amb. Wasescha (Switzerland), Negotiating Group on Market Access
- Amb. de Mateo y Venturini (Mexico), Special Session of the Council for Trade in Services
- Amb. Valles Galmes (Uruguay), Negotiating Group on Rules
- Amb. Mwape (Zambia), Special Session of the Council for TRIPS
- Amb. Teehanke (Philippines), Special Session of the Committee on Trade & Environment
- Amb. Saborio Soto (Costa Rica), Special Session of the Dispute Settlement Body
- Amb. Sophastienphong (Thailand), SpecialSession of the Committee on Trade & Development
- Amb. Sperisen-Yurt (Guatemala), Negotiating Group on Trade Facilitation

Before I invite the Trade Negotiations Committee to take note of the reports by the Chairpersons I would like to provide you with a brief update on my consultations on the issues of GI [geographical indications] extension and TRIPS/CBD [Trade-related intellectual property rights/Convention on Biological Diversity].

Ministers in Hong Kong requested me, as DG and not as TNC Chairperson, to intensify the existing consultative process on two TRIPS issues that were included as outstanding

implementation issues in the Doha Declaration and in subsequent ministerial declarations:

- the extension of the protection of geographical indications provided for in Article 23 of the TRIPS Agreement to products other than wines and spirits; and
- the relationship between the TRIPS Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

I was also mandated to report regularly on my consultations to the TNC and the General Council.

From March 2009 onwards, at the request of Members, I have undertaken these consultations personally, convening seven sessions between March 2009 and March 2010. I have reported on these consultations at successive meetings of the TNC and General Council. Further, in the interests of transparency and inclusiveness, I have also convened two open-ended sessions, in July 2009 and March 2010, to brief the full Membership on the consultations I had undertaken. My reports, which give the details of the consultations, including on the issues raised, were placed on the WTO website soon after each of these open-ended sessions.

My overall impression is that while my consultations have not created convergence they have certainly shed clearer light on the divergences. On both issues, we now understand more about what divides Members, and we have a better practical sense of what it could mean to bridge the gaps, if and when the decision comes to try to construct that bridge. My full reports touch on substantive points. Clearly, more work is needed if we are to see any movement towards convergence. It should also be noted that these consultations only deal with the substance of the issues, and have expressly not dealt with the broader, systemic issues such as the question of how the Doha mandate is to be read or implemented, and in particular whether, and if so how, these issues should be linked to the broader negotiating agenda.

In the coming days I will be consulting with Members with different sensitivities on both of these matters regarding the best way forward.

I now invite the Trade Negotiations Committee to take note of the reports by the Chairpersons of the Negotiating Bodies.

Source WTO