

**MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE**  
**Eighth Session**  
**Geneva, 15 - 17 December 2011**

**ELEMENTS FOR POLITICAL GUIDANCE**

In line with the procedure agreed at the General Council meeting on 30 November 2011, the following document is being circulated to Members and will be forwarded to the Chairman of the Ministerial Conference for inclusion as the consensus part of his statement.

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**Importance of the Multilateral Trading System and the WTO**

1. Ministers emphasize the value of the rules-based multilateral trading system and agree to strengthen it and make it more responsive to the needs of Members, especially in the current challenging global economic environment, in order to stimulate economic growth, employment and development.
  2. Ministers underscore that the WTO's role in keeping markets open is particularly critical in light of the challenging global economic environment. The WTO has a vital role to play in the fight against all forms of protectionism and in promoting economic growth and development. Ministers also acknowledge that experience has shown that protectionism tends to deepen global economic downturns. Ministers fully recognize WTO rights and obligations of Members and affirm their commitment to firmly resist protectionism in all its forms.
  3. Ministers underline the importance of the work of regular WTO bodies including their role in the oversight of implementing existing Agreements; dispute avoidance; transparency through monitoring and reporting and as a forum for the consideration of trade-related issues raised by Members. Ministers call for strengthening and improving their functioning.
  4. Ministers recognize the important asset that the WTO Dispute Settlement system represents and commit themselves to strengthen it, including through concluding the DSU review negotiations.
  5. Ministers welcome the accessions of Vanuatu, Samoa, and the Russian Federation to the WTO and recognize the contribution of accession to strengthening the multilateral trading system. Ministers remain committed to efforts to facilitate accessions, in particular of least-developed countries (LDCs).
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## **Trade and Development**

1. Ministers reaffirm that development is a core element of the WTO's work. They also reaffirm the positive link between trade and development and call for focused work in the Committee on Trade and Development (CTD) which is to conduct this work in accordance with its mandate and report the results achieved to Ministers at the Ninth Session. Ministers call on WTO Members to fully operationalize the mandate of the CTD as a focal point for development work.
  2. Ministers reaffirm the need for the WTO to assist in further integrating developing countries, particularly LDCs and, without creating a sub-category of WTO Members, small, vulnerable economies, into the multilateral trading system.
  3. Ministers acknowledge the needs of LDCs and commit themselves to ensure that LDCs' interests are given due priority in the future work of the WTO. In this regard, they have taken decisions concerning LDC accession in document WT/COMTD/LDC/19, extension of the LDC transition period under Article 66.1 of the TRIPS Agreement in document IP/C/59/Add.2, and LDCs services waiver in document TN/S/37. Ministers also urge the full implementation of Decision 36 of Annex F of the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration of 2005 on measures in favour of LDCs. Ministers also welcome the Istanbul Programme of Action for LDCs for the decade 2011-2020.
  4. Ministers confirm their commitment to on-going dialogue and engagement to progress the mandate in paragraph 11 of the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration to address cotton "ambitiously, expeditiously and specifically", within the agriculture negotiations. Ministers highlight the value of on-going reporting on cotton, and invite the Director-General to continue furnishing periodic reports on the development assistance aspects of cotton to each Ministerial Conference. Ministers commend the work being undertaken within the Director-General's Consultative Process to advance developmental assistance aspects of cotton.
  5. Ministers reaffirm the integrality of special and differential treatment provisions to the WTO agreements and their determination to fulfil the Doha mandate to review them with a view to strengthening them and making them more precise, effective and operational. Ministers agree to expedite work towards finalizing the Monitoring Mechanism for special and differential treatment. They also agree to take stock of the 28 Agreement-specific proposals in Annex C of the draft Cancún text with a view to formal adoption of those agreed.
  6. Ministers take note of the progress achieved on Aid for Trade and of the Third Global Aid for Trade Review. They agree to maintain, beyond 2011, Aid for Trade levels that at least reflect the average of the period 2006-2008 and to work with development banks to ensure the availability of trade finance to low income countries. Ministers reiterate their commitment to funding the WTO Global Trust Fund in a predictable and timely manner to enable the Secretariat to continue to provide the Technical Assistance and Capacity Building required.
  7. Ministers acknowledge WTO's co-operation with other development-related organizations, in particular, the International Trade Centre (ITC). Ministers reaffirm the ITC's role in improving and enhancing trade support institutions and policies for the benefit of exporting efforts; and in strengthening the export capacity of enterprises to respond to market opportunities. Ministers encourage the ITC to support and assist developing countries to address business environment and market access issues affecting the private sector.
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## **Doha Development Agenda**

1. Ministers deeply regret that, despite full engagement and intensified efforts to conclude the Doha Development Agenda single undertaking since the last Ministerial Conference, the negotiations are at an impasse.
  2. Ministers acknowledge that there are significantly different perspectives on the possible results that Members can achieve in certain areas of the single undertaking. In this context, it is unlikely that all elements of the Doha Development Round could be concluded simultaneously in the near future.
  3. Despite this situation, Ministers remain committed to work actively, in a transparent and inclusive manner, towards a successful multilateral conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda in accordance with its mandate.
  4. In order to achieve this end and to facilitate swifter progress, Ministers recognize that Members need to more fully explore different negotiating approaches while respecting the principles of transparency and inclusiveness.
  5. In this context, Ministers commit to advance negotiations, where progress can be achieved, including focusing on the elements of the Doha Declaration that allow Members to reach provisional or definitive agreements based on consensus earlier than the full conclusion of the single undertaking.
  6. Ministers also stress that they will intensify their efforts to look into ways that may allow Members to overcome the most critical and fundamental stalemates in the areas where multilateral convergence has proven to be especially challenging.
  7. Ministers maintain that, in their negotiations, they will continue their work based on the progress already made. Ministers affirm that any agreements reached, at any time, have to respect fully the development component of the mandate.
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