
General Council

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PREPARATIONS FOR THE 1999 MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

Organization and Management of the Future Work Programme of the WTO

Communication from Egypt

The following communication, dated 17 June 1999, has been received from the Permanent Mission of Egypt.

First: The scope

1. As indicated on numerous previous occasions, we believe that the utmost priority should be given to addressing implementation issues particularly those identified by developing countries. This consideration will be based, *inter alia*, on the outcome of the examination of paragraph 8 of the Second Ministerial Declaration. We expect to be able to find meaningful solutions for the difficulties that are facing developing countries in relation to implementation issues before the Third Ministerial Conference. However, we believe that despite our best efforts we might not be able to conclude the consideration of all implementation issues before the Conference.
2. So far, WTO Members are only committed to start the mandated negotiations and address the other elements of the built in agenda in accordance with the provisions of various agreements in time.
3. We are willing to continue the ongoing exploratory work on the issues initiated in Singapore in a constructive manner.
4. We will not accept any commitments to negotiate new issues without the completion of the consideration of the implementation difficulties in a satisfactory manner.
5. Particular attention should be given in the future work programme to the follow-up to the HLM on LDCs.

Second: The structure

6. We believe that a negotiating group should be established in the Third Ministerial Conference to find meaningful solutions to implementation difficulties, other than those identified in the areas of agriculture and trade in services. This negotiating group would address the difficulties that we are unable to conclude by the Third Ministerial Conference. The objective is not to unravel the URAs but to address the difficulties associated with the process of implementation.

7. Negotiations in the areas of agriculture and trade in services should take place in the Committee on Agriculture and the Council for Trade in Services, respectively, and should be overseen by the General Council.

8. The work programme initiated in Singapore would continue with less frequent meetings in order to provide adequate focus on implementation issues and the negotiations in the areas of agriculture and trade in services.

Third: The time framework

9. The work of the negotiating group on implementation should be completed before the end of the year 2000.

10. As far as negotiations in the areas of agriculture and trade in services are concerned, we propose that a review of the progress in these negotiations take place two years after their initiation. At that point in time it would be possible for WTO Members to consider a realistic deadline for the completion of these negotiations.

Fourth

11. We believe that the scope, structure, and time framework of the future work programme should be realistic and designed in a manner that would take into account the limited resources available to most developing countries and in particular LDCs.

12. We reserve our right to make additional proposals to address various elements of the organization and management of the future work programme.
