

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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General Council

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PREPARATIONS FOR THE 1999 MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

Organization and Management of the Work Programme

Communication from Japan

The following communication, dated 27 July 1999, has been received from the Permanent Mission of Japan.

1. With regard to the issue of the work programme for the next negotiations, as outlined in Paragraph 10 of the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the Second Ministerial Conference, the Government of Japan would like to make the following proposal. It hereby reserves its right to submit additional proposals and opinions during the third phase of the preparatory process, based on the further progress in the discussions.

Proposal

General principles

2. The following should be pursued during the next multilateral trade negotiations. That is, the negotiations should be:

- (a) comprehensive and able to respond to the various concerns of all WTO Members, including developing-country Members;
- (b) conducted as a single undertaking;
- (c) completed within a period of approximately three years.

Scope of the negotiations and their aims

3. A large number of WTO Members have already expressed their views that the next negotiations should be broad-based in order to respond to the interests and concerns of all WTO Members, developed and developing alike. In light of such, as well as of the need to meet the expectations on the role of the WTO in globalizing economies, we should now determine the scope of the negotiations, taking into consideration the following points. We should not, at this stage, exclude any specific sectors a priori from the scope of the negotiations.

(i) *Implementation/rules*

4. The issues of implementation/rules can be categorized into the following:

- (a) those arising from a lack of human and/or institutional capacity constraints (i.e. issues related to technical assistance);
- (b) those related to a lack of clarity in the existing provisions;
- (c) those which require a modification of the existing provisions.

5. Of these, certain issues in points (b) and (c) should be taken up during the next negotiations.

(ii) *Agriculture*

6. It is important to establish a set of rules and disciplines that are fair and equitable for all the Members, which enable a coexistence of the various types of agriculture. In making such rules and disciplines, the following, *inter alia*, should be ensured:

- that due consideration be given to food security and other aspects of multifunctionality in agriculture;
- that the imbalance found in the rights and obligations under WTO rules between exporting and importing countries be redressed.

(iii) *Services*

7. It is important to achieve progressive liberalization, taking into account the interests of each Member.

(iv) *Industrial tariffs/forestry and fishery products*

8. Industrial tariff negotiations should be commenced with such objectives as further reducing tariff rates and improving the coverage of bound products. For the negotiations on forestry and fishery products, due attention should be paid to the global environmental issues and the sustainable use of natural resources.

(v) *Response of the WTO under a globalized economy*

9. The ongoing globalization of the economy requires the WTO to respond to the subsequent expectations arising from the Members. Certain issues should, therefore, be tackled during the next negotiations, as per that mentioned in, for example, other proposals tabled by Japan.

Negotiation structure

10. The Ministerial Conference should be the primary body to supervise the next negotiations. It should bear the responsibility of their launching, should conduct interim reviews and should take charge of the conclusion of the negotiations as a whole.

11. Several options could be considered for the actual negotiation structure, while further discussions should be carried out, taking account of such factors as:

- (a) efficiency during the conduct of the negotiations; and
- (b) reduction of the workload for developing-country Members.

Time-frame

- 12. The negotiations themselves should be completed within approximately three years.
- 13. The Fourth Session of the Ministerial Conference should be held towards the middle of 2001 in order to review the results of the negotiations conducted so far and to provide guidance in leading the way towards the subsequent year, or year and a half period, of negotiations remaining.
- 14. The Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference should be held at the end of 2002 for the conclusion of the negotiations.

Other matters for consideration

(i) Meeting the concerns of developing-country Members

15. Active participation in the multilateral trading system by developing countries is an indispensable and important element for both the development of developing countries themselves and the benefit of the multilateral trading system as a whole. Thus, during the next negotiations, appropriate consideration should be given to the concerns of the developing countries, in accordance with their current state and needs, in order that both developed and developing countries can share the benefits. In particular, Japan would like to point out that many developing countries have insisted on the need to clarify and strengthen anti-dumping rules.

(ii) Trade and the environment

16. Due consideration should be paid to the issue of environment during the next negotiations. It is also necessary to opt for a balanced approach, seeing as the issue of trade and the environment covers one aspect of the various issues to be dealt with under the WTO.

(iii) Points (i) and (ii) above and their relationship with the negotiating structure

17. These two points (i.e. "Meeting the concerns of developing countries" and "Trade and the environment") should be paid appropriate attention as necessary. In this regard, particularly, Japan has tabled another proposal, advocating the establishment of a separate group for forestry and fishery products from other non-agricultural products in order to account for the global environmental issues and the sustainable use of natural resources.

Background

18. The next WTO negotiations must achieve balanced results that impart merits to all WTO Members, and that are able to respond to the globalization of the economy and to any new challenges based on past experiences.

19. Bearing in mind such an objective, the next negotiations must be comprehensive, as only wide-ranging negotiations can respond to the diverse concerns of all WTO Members. Furthermore, in order to achieve a balanced outcome and benefits to all WTO Members, the negotiations should be concluded as a single undertaking. At the same time, we should aim at terminating the negotiations within a short time-frame, i.e. approximately three years. As a result of such, a balanced approach shall naturally be taken when discussing the scope of the negotiations.
