

GENERAL COUNCIL

Number of Posts of Deputy Directors-General

*Statement by Ambassador Ali Mchumo Chairman of the General Council
at the Meeting on 6 October 1999¹*

1. Delegations will recall that in the context of the consultations leading to the appointment of the new Director-General last July, I was mandated to conduct consultations to enable the General Council to take a decision on the number of Deputy Directors-General that need to be appointed before the new Director-General makes the appointments in consultation with Members. As delegations are aware, I have been conducting intensive consultations since the end of the summer break on the question of the number of posts of Deputy Directors-General in the WTO in pursuance of the mandate as explained above.
2. Through my consultations, it has become apparent that there is still a broad divergence of views as to whether there should be one, two, three, four or five Deputy Directors-General. In the absence of a clear consensus, a majority of delegations have expressed their willingness to settle for the status quo, that is, the four posts of Deputy Directors-General which are presently in existence, in the understanding that this matter will be reviewed at the appropriate time in the context of the Review of the WTO Secretariat and Senior Management Structure in the General Council. These delegations have expressed the concern that a long and divisive debate on this question would have serious implications for the WTO and would dangerously hamper the preparatory process for the Ministerial Conference.
3. Furthermore, following suggestions by a large number of delegations I also consulted with the Director-General in order to obtain his views on the matter. Mr. Mike Moore conveyed to me the following considerations:
 - (a) Should Members settle on the present number of four Deputy Directors-General, the Director-General is confident that four deputies would be of considerable assistance in the work to be done in Seattle and beyond. It is his view furthermore that this is a good number in terms of the current work programme and the existing structure of the Secretariat. His preference therefore is for Members to agree on four DDGs.
 - (b) Since views differ among Members as to how many Deputy Directors-General should be in the Secretariat, the Director-General feels that, if agreement can be reached now on retaining the situation as it has existed in the recent past, this could be on the explicit understanding that Members may revert to the question in the context of further consideration after Seattle of the Senior Management Structure of the Secretariat.

¹ At its meeting on 6 October 1999 the General Council agreed that, if no objection is received by 11 October 1999, the proposal on the number of posts of Deputy Directors-General contained in this statement would be considered as agreed. Since no objections were received by 11 October 1999 the proposal is agreed.

- (c) The Director-General urged a speedy resolution of this issue since he needs the Deputy Directors-General in place as soon as possible.
- (d) Finally, the Director-General emphasized that as always, he is in the hands of the General Council on this matter.

4. On 29 September 1999 I held an informal meeting of the General Council at which I reported my conclusions to Members. At that meeting it became apparent that there is still a broad divergence of views as to the number of Deputy Directors-General to be appointed. A number of ancillary issues were also raised, regarding equitable and balanced distribution of posts and the duration of the terms of office of the new Deputy Directors-General. I have brought this matter to the attention of the Director-General, who will be consulting with delegations on the overall question of the appointment of the new Deputy Directors-General.

In view of this situation and the impossibility to arrive at an early consensus on any eventual changes in the Senior Management Structure of the Secretariat, delegations expressed their willingness at that meeting to settle for the status quo, that is the four posts of Deputy Directors-General which are presently in existence, in the understanding that this matter will be reviewed at the appropriate time in the context of the review of the WTO Secretariat and the Senior Management Structure in the General Council. Three delegations expressed reservations concerning this approach. In concluding the meeting I urged these delegations to consult further and seek instructions from their authorities so that an agreement may be reached by today's meeting.

5. It seems to me of utmost importance that the General Council be in a position to act on this matter today, in order to enable the Director-General to appoint his deputies. Since a consensus on a precise number of posts still does not seem possible at the present time, I wish to make the following proposal to the General Council:

- (a) The General Council will take note of all views expressed by delegations concerning the Senior Management Structure of the Secretariat and the number of posts of Deputy Directors-General.
- (b) The General Council will agree to revert to this matter at the earliest possible opportunity.
- (c) In the light of the above, the General Council takes note that the present Senior Management Structure of the Secretariat, consisting of one Director-General and four Deputy Directors-General is maintained, pending the conclusions to be reached in the context of the Review of the WTO Secretariat and Senior Management Structure.

6. I propose that the General Council also agree that the review of the WTO Secretariat and Senior Management Structure be carried out in conjunction with the review of the current Rules and Procedures for appointment of Directors-General, to be concluded by the end of September 2000, as provided for in the decision of 22 July 1999 on the appointment of the next Director-General (WT/L/308). It is understood that the review of the WTO Secretariat and Senior Management Structure shall be carried out in the light of the earlier discussions held in the General Council on this matter in 1997 and 1998, based on the decision adopted by the General Council on 24 April 1997 (WT/L/207).

I hope that the General Council can agree to this proposal by consensus.
