

Pakistan intervention for Room W
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Minister for Commerce
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THANK YOU, respected Chair, for your kind recognition and for the thorough report as well as for your personal assessment.

As a founding member of GATT/WTO, Pakistan values the multilateral trading system and the consensus-based mechanism as an opportunity to achieve a level playing field.

Bali Ministerial provided us an opportunity to reinvigorate the Doha Development Agenda. The guiding principle for this work remains the development dimension. The first WTO Ministerial to be held on the African continent would be an ideal occasion to complete the Doha Development Agenda.

Pakistan embarked on agriculture trade reforms in the early nineties as part of the structural reform process to benefit from the global market.

Millions of Pakistani farmers rely on international markets. Sudden price fluctuations and price depression have an immediate impact on their livelihood. High prices create an immediate impact on the consumer spending, especially of the most vulnerable. If they are spending more on food it would mean their children would not have access to health and education.

WTO disciplines under the Agreement on Agriculture create a distinction between producer and consumer subsidy. It provides policy space to look after the subsistence level farmers.

The balance of rights and obligations under the current rules is important for countries such as Pakistan that have scarce fiscal space to subsidize their farmers. We thus cannot ignore unintended consequences of public stockholding in the form of trade distortions.

I am an elected Parliamentarian from one Pakistan's major rice-growing districts, which has predominately small farmers. To hear our farmers attributing failure of their markets to WTO would create difficulties for us in defending WTO in Parliament and to the Pakistani people.

Twenty one percent of Pakistan's GDP comes from agriculture and half of our workforce is agrarian. Our people expect a fair deal at home from this multilateral forum.

On Special Safeguard Mechanism, we have a strong interest in designing an effective monitoring tool to address import surges and to prevent Special Safeguard Mechanism from becoming a tool for protectionism.

On market access, we are ready to explore some of the options enunciated by the Chair if they meet objectives of the tiered formula. We recognize the linkage of Agriculture, NAMA and Services market access but it is also important that work continues in all areas to meet the July deadline.

Respected Chair,

As a consequence of democratic consolidation in 2013, when for the first time one elected government completed its term and transferred power peacefully to another government, Pakistan today is emerging from a long national nightmare of violent extremism.

We are seeking shared regional prosperity through economic integration. We are reducing tariffs, facilitating transit trade, and increasing connectivity of infrastructure, customs, financial systems and travel.

I assure you that WTO will continue to be a vital pillar of trade policy of this newly-stabilising and growing Pakistan. We are assembling a new team at our WTO Mission and look forward to working with all of you, the member-states, in achieving a level-playing field for international trade.

Since this is my first visit to WTO, I shall assume poetic license and quote EM Forster, “Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted... Only connect. Live in fragments no longer.”

Thank you.