



13th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC13): debrief on agriculture

11 April 2024

1. Scene Setter for MC13

- **WTO at the crossroads**

- **Agriculture** is just one of the issues in the WTO negotiations
 - **Dispute Settlement Body** is blocked
 - Interest in new issues: environment, policy space for development, industrial policy, technology transfer
 - **Variety of positions, complicated politics:** developed/developing (emerging), BRICS, Africa, importers/exporters
 - **How to advance the agricultural reform agenda?**
 - **Food security crisis – what is WTO response?**
 - **Sustainability/ Climate change – what is WTO role?**
- 2
- **2024 is the elections year for many WTO Members including US and India**

2. WTO agricultural negotiations

The pillars of agricultural negotiations:

- I. **Domestic support** – disciplining/limiting trade-distorting **subsidies**
 - II. **Market Access** –reducing “Most-favoured nation” (MFN) **tariffs** on agricultural imports
 - III. **Export competition and export restrictions** – strengthening **transparency** and reinforcing **disciplines**
- **Issues with standalone Ministerial Mandates:** Negotiations on **Cotton**, **Special Safeguard Mechanism**, Permanent Solution on **Public Stockholding**

Updating the global rules on trade in food and agricultural goods remains the top negotiating priority for the WTO Members.

3. Negotiations in Geneva

- **In Geneva**

- Negotiations take place in Special Session of the Committee on Agriculture (CoASS), including Dedicated Sessions on PSH and SSM
- Role of the Chair of the CoASS (Türkiye) and the “Members driven process”
- Follow up to the 12th Ministerial Conference outcome : ***Ministerial Declaration on Emergency Response to Food Insecurity***
- Groups of WTO Members coordinating positions and proposals
- EU hosted Ambassador level small group on Agriculture of 8 major WTO Members
- Long standing issue: how to solve public stockholding?
- Different levels of engagement: mini-ministerial meetings, senior officials' meetings, thematic seminars (food security, public stockholding, domestic support, export restrictions, market access), WTO Ambassadors meetings, etc.
- Finally, the **Chair's draft text on agriculture** for MC13

4. Negotiations in Abu Dhabi

- In Abu Dhabi
 - **WTO: Director General** Dr. Okonjo-Iweala; **Minister Facilitator** (Kenya), **CoASS Chair**, **WTO Secretariat**
 - **EU:** European Commission: DG TRADE, DG AGRI, DG MARE – representation at Commissioner level
 - Official negotiations process led by Minister Facilitator and CoASS Chair – plenary and small groups
 - Members driven process – EU agriculture small group of Ambassadors
 - WTO Director General's process facilitated at Ministerial level – “green rooms”
 - Work on MC13 decision on agriculture reform
 - Stumble block: public stockholding for food security purposes

5. MC13 Outcomes and Way Forward

- **Abu Dhabi Ministerial Declaration** - commitment to preserve and strengthen the ability of the WTO to respond to current trade challenges
- **Accession of Comoros and Timor-Leste**
- **Ministerial Decision on** LDCs graduation
- **Extension of** E-commerce moratorium
- **Decision** on dispute settlement reform
- **Ministerial Declaration** on strengthening regulatory cooperation to reduce technical barriers to trade (TBT)
- **Ministerial Declaration** on sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS) – implementation of special and differential treatment provisions of the SPS and TBT Agreements

6. Way Forward

- MC13 outcome in **agriculture** – a **negotiating text** covering all issues, but no deliverables for the most **vulnerable members**.
- Way forward towards **MC14 in Cameroun** in 2026:
 - What should be **the focus** of negotiations ?
 - How to integrate **sustainability** in the negotiations?
 - Impact of **upcoming CAP** reform?
 - How to solve **Public Stockholding** for food security purposes?



Thank you!

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