

Negotiating Group on Trade Facilitation

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NEGOTIATING GROUP

1. The compilation document (TN/TF/W/43/Rev.15) reflects the progress that the Negotiating Group has made in advancing the negotiations in line with the work programme agreed on at the Hong Kong Ministerial meeting.
2. These negotiations have continued to benefit from the bottom-up process that had characterized this Group's working method throughout, and that will provide the best means of bringing the negotiations to a successful conclusion.
3. Further negotiations to establish the text of the Agreement will continue on the basis of the compilation of proposals, using the worksheets and the aide-memoires¹ in which account is taken of the suggestions for additions, eliminations and modifications that are made by delegations with respect to those proposals. These documents are without prejudice to Members' positions, including the right of each delegation to continue to make further suggestions for additions, eliminations and modifications to the proposals. They will be updated regularly to reflect progress in these negotiations.
4. Work will continue to take place in a variety of configurations, combining NGTF sessions with complementary activities by the Membership in various formats (bilateral, plurilateral, open-ended). In this context, I particularly encourage delegations to intensify their ongoing informal, open-ended process of negotiations on S&D and capacity-building. The outcome of these initiatives will be reported back to the NGTF on a regular basis with the Negotiating Group equally reporting on the state-of-play of its work to the TNC.
5. Technical assistance and support for capacity building is being provided to developing and least-developed countries to help them to fully participate in and benefit from the negotiations, in particular by assisting them individually, on request, to conduct a national assessment to identify their needs and priorities in the area of trade facilitation. The programme of needs assessment will contribute to the successful conclusion of these negotiations.

¹ JOB(08)12, JOB(08)13, JOB(08)17 and JOB(08)48.