

**Committee on Trade and Development
Special Session**

**SPECIAL SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON
TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT**

Report by the Chairman, Mr. Faizel Ismail (South Africa),
to the Trade Negotiations Committee

I. STATUS OF WORK

1. Since the report to the twelfth meeting of the Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) in April 2004 (TN/CTD/9), a number of bilateral and plurilateral consultations have been held with Members in an attempt to move the work on special and differential treatment (S&D) forward with the objective of fulfilling the mandate contained in Paragraph 44 of the Doha Ministerial Declaration, to carry out "the review of all special and differential treatment provisions with a view to strengthening them and making them more precise, effective and operational".

2. As indicated in the last report to the TNC, in an attempt to unlock the existing impasse on S&D, three questions were put to Members, namely;

- What did Members wish to do with the proposals on which they had already agreed to in principle;
- How could the current discussions on S&D be made more productive; and
- What suggestions Members had on the way forward so as to fulfil the Doha Mandate of making S&D more precise, effective and operational.

3. During these consultations, it had also been suggested that engaging in a broader debate on the underlying development issues related to the S&D would assist in identifying possible areas of convergence. Some Members had expressed support for such an approach, while others insisted on the need to focus on the Agreement-specific proposals. Members did not question the importance of the development dimension of the DDA and fully agreed on the need to make progress on the S&D Work Programme. However, views differed on whether or not it was opportune to harvest the package of recommendations on the 28 Agreement-specific proposals or whether these should be adopted only after the package has been further strengthened. Most Members have stressed the need for any possible package in July to include a strong developmental component.

4. With a view to exploring the way forward and to identify possible S&D elements for the July package, the Chairman of the Special Session has continued to hold informal consultations. During these meetings, it has been impressed upon Members that they should identify the broad elements that could possibly form part of the July package. Based on the preliminary feedback obtained from Members in these consultations, it does appear that, *inter alia*, the following elements could constitute the development component of the July package:

- A rededication and commitment to the development dimension of the WTO and the need to ensure that the Doha Round is a genuine development round;
- A decision on the 28 Agreement-specific proposals on which Members had agreed to in principle; and

- Elaboration of the process that would unlock the current impasse and take the work on remaining issues forward.

5. Development concerns form an integral part of the Doha Ministerial Declaration. Members therefore feel that it is important to rededicate and recommit themselves to the development dimension of the Doha Declaration which has placed the needs and interests of developing and least-developed countries at the heart of the WTO work programme. They also believe that it is crucial to set up a process that will ensure that all the remaining aspects of the S&D Work Programme are addressed. In that context, it was stressed during the informal consultations that it would be important to formulate a set of guiding principles to advance the work on S&D. *Inter alia*, these could include a commitment to participate and strengthen the multilateral rules-based system and to work towards ensuring that this system is fair, balanced, coherent and supportive of development. However, Members continue to have somewhat different views on the approach towards the adoption of the package of 28 Agreement-specific proposals on which there is an in-principle agreement.

II. FUTURE WORK

6. The Chairman is continuing to hold further bilateral and plurilateral consultations to flesh out the above elements. An open-ended informal meeting of the Special Session has been scheduled shortly after the TNC meeting. The objective of the meeting is to discuss Members' views on the language relating to the S&D component of the July package. The next formal meeting of the Special Session is scheduled to be held on 19 July 2004.
