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**Negotiating Group on Rules**

**CHAIR'S REPORT TO THE INFORMAL MEETING OF HEADS OF DELEGATIONS  
ON THE RULES NEGOTIATIONS**

H.E. AMBASSADOR WAYNE MCCOOK

*1 December 2016*

In my last report to this body, in late September, I provided a brief report indicating that I would be holding bilateral consultations with interested delegations in mid-October, to hear from Members about how to proceed, with eyes on MC 11. Since that report there have been a number of developments which I will briefly summarize.

Some 17 delegations and group representatives took up my invitation to meet bilaterally. They identified what they saw as the priority areas for our work, and expressed views about our process or working methods.

In mid-November, I convened an open-ended session of the NG Rules to provide a transparency report on the consultations, and to hear delegations' views on the work of the Group. In addition, one newly-submitted proposal was introduced and discussed, and two other not-yet-submitted proposals also were discussed.

Concerning the work of the Negotiating Group generally, Members' statements at the meeting were largely consistent with what I had heard in my consultations. In particular, many delegations identified reaching an outcome on fisheries subsidies as a priority for MC 11. In this context, most of these delegations cited SDG Target 14.6, with its 2020 deadline for completion of the WTO fisheries subsidies negotiations, and considered that the Negotiating Group should treat fisheries subsidies as a standalone issue. A number of delegations also mentioned the initiative on fisheries subsidies that has been launched by a group of delegations, and considered that any such parallel work should complement rather than compete with the multilateral work.

Some delegations indicated an interest in outcomes in other areas as well, in particular trade remedies, and in one case horizontal subsidies disciplines. Some of these delegations stressed the need for balance across Rules pillars in any eventual outcomes, while some considered that the time is not ripe for detailed discussions of these issues.

I indicated in my consultations and at the meeting that for work to progress on any issue, we would need written submissions from Members, and that each submission would receive full consideration by the Group. Work on each issue would progress organically, on its own merits, on the basis of Members' engagement in and contributions to the discussion.

As I mentioned, the process of considering proposals already started at the November meeting. Since then, two new fisheries subsidies proposals have been submitted. These are the two that were foreshadowed at the November meeting. We thus have on the table three written proposals on fisheries subsidies, and we now must turn to each of them (and any others that may be submitted) in detail. To that end, I have called an open-ended session of the Negotiating Group, dedicated to fisheries subsidies, on Friday 9 December.

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