

## Fisheries subsidies negotiations chair introduces revised draft consolidated text

At a 2 November meeting convened at the level of heads of delegations to the WTO, the chair of the Negotiating Group, Ambassador Santiago Wills (Colombia), presented a revised draft consolidated text for an agreement on fisheries subsidies. The chair said the updated document aims to clarify the text based on members' discussions, and introduces wording to elaborate on placeholders, with a view to further focusing the negotiations.

"In putting forward this revision, I am mindful of the Trade Negotiations Committee guidelines that negotiating chairs, through the negotiating process, should aim to facilitate consensus and to seek to evolve consensus texts," the chair said, noting that the revised consolidated text is without prejudice to any member's position. "I am confident that all delegations will find things to like in the changes that I am proposing, and that this revision thus will represent a step forward in the evolution of our work toward that full consensus."

"Despite difficult circumstances, our Negotiating Group has managed to make progress with an exemplary level of engagement and participation. I am encouraged that we have been engaged in a genuinely intense and continuous negotiating mode," the chair said. Excerpts from the chair's speaking notes are available [here](https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news20_e/fish_02nov20_excerpts_e.htm) ([https://www.wto.org/english/news\\_e/news20\\_e/fish\\_02nov20\\_excerpts\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news20_e/fish_02nov20_excerpts_e.htm)).

The chair called on members to approach the revised text with a mindset focused on compromise. Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and related containment measures, the chair asked members to remain flexible on arrangements for discussions on the revised consolidated text and said they will be informed once concrete plans are in place.

In the meantime, at the cluster of meetings scheduled for the rest of the week, members will further discuss pending issues including: the duration of a subsidy prohibition where a vessel or operator is found to have engaged in illegal, unreported or unregulated (IUU) fishing; unassessed stocks; dispute settlement and remedies; and special and differential treatment for developing and least-developed country members. Time has also been allotted this week for members to hold bilateral or other meetings and for consultations with the chair.

Members also held "intersessional" discussions after the 5-9 October cluster of meetings where Brazil introduced its revised proposal on a mechanism for reductions of and limits on fisheries subsidies, and members tackled a number of issues including: artisanal fishing; government-to-government fisheries access agreements; and due process in IUU determinations.

Members continue to also deliberate on how the pandemic may affect timelines for concluding negotiations.

At the WTO's 11th Ministerial Conference, ministers agreed, consistent with UN Sustainable Development Goal Target 14.6, to secure an agreement in 2020 on disciplines eliminating subsidies for illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and prohibiting certain forms of fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, with special and differential treatment for developing and least-developed countries.

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