

India's Statement delivered by Ambassador & PR at the Special Session of the General Council Meeting for the appointment of the DG WTO held on 15 February 2021

Appointment of the Next WTO Director General: Special General Council Meeting

15 February 2021

Statement by Brajendra Navnit, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and good evening colleagues, India would like to thank you Chair for convening this Special General Council Meeting on the appointment of the next Director General.

2. India is delighted to join the rest of the WTO Membership in endorsing the recommendation of the 'Troika' to appoint Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iwela of Nigeria as the next WTO Director General.

3. In this regard, we also thank Minister Yoo for her very gracious and positive campaign during the selection process. We wish her the best in her future endeavors.

4. I take this opportunity to congratulate Dr. Ngozi for her successful campaign. Dr. Ngozi's selection is historic, not only as she is the first African, but also as the first woman to head the Organization. On behalf of my country, I also wish to congratulate the people of Nigeria and Africa on her success. India enjoys deep ties with the African continent and we are extremely delighted to share this joy with our brothers & sisters from Africa.

5. WTO is at a critical cross-road today and Dr. Ngozi's leadership of the organization will be more critical than ever. In this regard, it is heartening to note that the next DG enjoys wide support of the Membership and we hope that with her vast experience including in the field of development economics, Dr. Ngozi will be able to provide the leadership that the WTO needs today. Especially since trade is essentially a means to achieve development and all-round economic prosperity.

6. Chair, Mahatma Gandhi, who began his civil rights movement while in Africa, had given us a talisman^[1] which I am sure that Dr. Ngozi is aware of, he had suggested a test when in doubt while taking a decision. We encourage Dr. Ngozi to apply this test whenever in doubt and be guided by the need for promoting the welfare of world's vast population of the poor and the vulnerable. We hope that under her leadership the outcomes that the WTO delivers will improve their lives. India looks forward to closely working with Dr. Ngozi towards this end.

7. Finally, Chair, I would be failing in my duty if I did not thank you and the other distinguished members of the 'Troika', Ambassador Dacio and Ambassador Harald for conducting the DG selection process in a fair, independent and transparent manner.

8. Last four months of patience has re-emphasized this belief that if you refuse to accept anything but the best, you very often get it.

I thank you Chair, once again congratulations to Director General Dr. Ngozi and "Namaste" from India.

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