

Trade Policy Unit

Daily news and updates

(1) WTO Members resume discussions on e-commerce following MC12 outcome

Ambassador Canabady: “There is a sense of engagement from all members”

- WTO members kicked off discussions last week on identifying specific cross-cutting issues to be addressed under the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce as a follow-up to the decision taken at the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) in June 2022. WTO members agreed at MC12 to reinvigorate the Work Programme, particularly regarding its development dimension. They also agreed to maintain their current practice of not imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions and to intensify discussions on this moratorium.
- Ambassador Usha Dwarka-Canabady, the facilitator on the E-commerce Work Programme and moratorium, said: “There is a sense of engagement from all members ... The work has started today.” During last week’s meeting, a group of members presented a proposal on how to reinvigorate the Work Programme. Members also shared their views on topics to be addressed and on the way forward, including on the moratorium.
- As per consultations held post MC12, members generally supported holding dedicated discussions under the auspices of the General Council to address so-called horizontal issues cutting across various trade topics, particularly in regard to the development dimension.

Source: WTO

(2) World Bank’s publication

“Africa in the New Trade Environment: Market Access in Troubled Times”

- World Bank’s book “Africa in the New Trade Environment: Market Access in Troubled Times”, analyzes the trade track ahead of Africa and recommends the kind of aerodynamics, tires, and engine that the region needs to succeed. The book offers a three-pronged policy approach to bolster Africa’s market access in the current global trade environment: evaluate and re-engineer trade with traditional partners, the United States (US) and the European Union (EU); strategically diversify trade with Asia; and look inward to deepen regional trade integration.

- According to the highlights of the publication, African countries would benefit from expanding and diversifying their participation in international trade and global value chains to reduce poverty on a large scale and transform their economies. While African exports of goods and services have seen their fastest growth in the past decade, the volumes remain low at just 3% of global trade. A new trade policy framework is needed that will help expand and diversify the region's access to export markets, while also strengthening intra-regional trade.

Source: World Bank

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