



Consensus-based decision-making is the bedrock of WTO's legitimacy: Commerce and Industries Minister, Shri. Piyush Goyal in WTO MC-14

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On the second day of WTO MC14, which is currently underway in Yaounde, Cameroon, Trade Ministers of WTO member countries deliberated on WTO reform issues. Hon'ble Commerce and Industries Minister, Shri Piyush Goyal is leading the Indian delegation for MC 14.

Speaking on the issue of 'Decision making including past mandates', Shri Goyal emphasised that consensus-based decision-making is the bedrock of the WTO's legitimacy, and it is important for the WTO not to ignore the sovereign right of each member to not bind itself to rules which they do not agree to. While underlining the importance of rebuilding trust for overcoming challenges in reaching decisions through consensus, India stressed on the importance of the WTO to undertake a careful stock-take of the current impasse and its underlying causes, while ensuring discussions remain transparent, inclusive and Member-driven. India also highlighted that an integrated multilateral trading system cannot thrive alongside fragmentation within its own institutional framework.

On the 'Level playing field issues', Shri. Goyal emphasised that discussions must take into account the asymmetries from the Uruguay Round. India focused on the need for long pending issues like food security, PSH, SSM on Cotton to be prioritised while taking up new issues to address the structural asymmetries. Highlighting the continued dysfunction of the dispute settlement system, India emphasised that without effective adjudication, rules lose their enforceability, thereby disproportionately disadvantaging smaller economies. India also cautioned against weaponising transparency to justify trade retaliation or challenge legitimate domestic policies. Instead, it should be accompanied by meaningful and

sustained capacity-building support, ensuring that all Members can meet obligations fairly and effectively. India also stressed on the importance of all Members to have a fair opportunity to build productive capacity, create employment, and participate meaningfully in global trade.

The day concluded with a Ministerial Plenary Session on WTO Reform Transparency. Speaking during this session, Commerce Secretary, Shri Rajesh Agrawal, extended India's support for a time-bound restart of reform efforts with milestones, based on a more robust evidentiary analysis and through engagement with submissions and Ministerial Decisions. India unequivocally called for eschewing cherry-picking issues and proliferating preconceived and prejudged positions. India also highlighted the need to give greater importance to the role of WTO Committees, which, through their lived and learned experiences, can contribute to an exhaustive stocktake through a bottom-up approach. While cautioning against plurilaterals fragmenting the multilateral trading system, Shri Agrawal called for the consensus process to be premised on the principles of openness, transparency, inclusivity, participative and member-driven.

On the sidelines of the second day of the MC14 meetings, Shri Goyal held bilateral meetings with his counterparts from US, China, Korea, Switzerland, New Zealand, Canada, Morocco and Oman. Discussions were focused on the MC 14 agenda as well as on matters related to deepening bilateral trade ties.

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