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DRAFT MINISTERIAL DECISION ON ESTABLISHING A WORK PROGRAMME FOR MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMEs) IN THE WTO

PROPOSAL BY THE GROUP OF FRIENDS OF MSMEs[1]

Revision[2]

The following communication, dated 10 December 2017, is being circulated at the request of the delegations of Afghanistan; Albania; Antigua and Barbuda; Argentina; Australia; Bahrain; Brazil; Brunei Darussalam; Canada; Chile; China; Colombia; Costa Rica; Dominica; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; El Salvador; European Union; Grenada; Guatemala; Honduras; Hong Kong, China; Iceland; Israel; Japan; Kenya, Korea, Republic of; Kyrgyz Republic; Liechtenstein; Malaysia; Mexico; Moldova, Republic of; Montenegro; New Zealand; Nicaragua; Norway; Pakistan; Panama; Paraguay; Peru; Philippines; Qatar; Russian Federation; Saint Kitts and Nevis; Saint Lucia; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Singapore; Switzerland; Chinese Taipei; The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Turkey; Uruguay and Viet Nam.

The *Ministerial Conference,*

Acknowledging that the participation of MSMEs in international trade has emerged as an important issue in the WTO agenda;

Recognizing that Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) perform a significant role in the national economies of WTO Members, as sources of job creation, innovation, entrepreneurship and economic growth;

Recognizing that costs related to foreign trade operations represent a significant burden for MSMEs interested in participating in international trade;

Recognizing that MSMEs from developing countries and especially the least developed countries among them face additional obstacles when participating in international trade;

Building on the work undertaken by the WTO in addressing trade issues and the relevant work of other international organizations.

Decides as follows:

1 ARTICLE 1 – ESTABLISHMENT OF A WORK PROGRAMME

1.1. To establish a Work Programme for MSMEs, which shall include, among others, the following issues:

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[1] Originally circulated in document JOB/GC/147.

[2] This revision adds Antigua and Barbuda, Bahrain, Dominica, Grenada, Kenya, Kyrgyz Republic, Liechtenstein, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the list of co-sponsors.

a. Improve access to information on trade requirements, regulations and markets for MSMEs;[3]

b. Consider ways to promote a more predictable regulatory environment for MSMEs;[4]

c. Identify measures that contribute to reducing trade costs for MSMEs in areas such as trade facilitation, shipping and logistics, and procedures and requirements related to origin;

d. Promote, including through cooperation with other multilateral institutions, access to trade finance for MSMEs;

e. Further identify issues of particular interest to MSMEs that could be addressed in WTO Trade Policy reports;

f. Consider how technical assistance and capacity building initiatives could take into account the trade needs and challenges of MSMEs.

1.2. The discussions under the Work Programme shall favour horizontal and non-discriminatory solutions which are likely to yield benefits for the participation of MSMEs in international trade, taking into account the specific needs of developing countries and LDCs.

2 ARTICLE 2 – STRUCTURE

2.1. A Working Group will be established under the General Council to conduct the discussions on the issues listed in Article 1.

2.2. The Working Group shall consider the work of other WTO bodies. As appropriate, it may invite these bodies to undertake specific assignments and cooperate with them closely in areas of their competence.

2.3. The General Council will review the progress made by the Working Group at least once a year. In providing guidance to the Working Group, the General Council may also supplement the issues set forth in Article 1.

2.4. The Working Group will prepare a first report for the Twelfth Ministerial Conference.

[3] These elements are without prejudice to negotiating proposals currently examined by Members.
[4] These elements are without prejudice to negotiating proposals currently examined by Members.