

Doha Development Agenda negotiations

WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy, who [chairs the Trade Negotiations Committee](#), urged members to work pragmatically on the [Doha Development Agenda \(Doha Round\)](#) in the coming year: on identifying which issues might be settled more quickly and on how to deal with other issues that are more difficult to resolve.

One danger, he warned, is that members will spend too much time haggling over which issues are "low hanging fruit" — candidates for quicker agreement. Instead of getting to work on those issues, members would simply go round and round the tree trying to choose the low hanging fruit, he warned, a metaphor that some other ministers echoed.

Mr Lamy said members broadly agree on the diagnosis of why the Doha Round is deadlocked. They also share a desire to finish the negotiations as a whole ("single undertaking") package. They have to fill the gap between the diagnosis and the desire, he said.

Ministers and other heads of delegations agreed that the talks' impasse is disappointing and that ultimately the outcome should be the entire "single undertaking" package, even if some issues are tackled first.

The candidate topics for quicker "early harvest" agreements that were mentioned most frequently were [trade facilitation](#) and [duty-free and quota-free market access for least developed countries' exports](#).

However there were differences in emphasis. For example some developing countries stressed the importance of liberalizing trade, some stressed the need for special treatment to allow them room to raise tariffs or subsidies or take other action in trade ("policy space"), and some complained that failure to conclude the Doha Round has left countries the policy space to raise tariffs and subsidies. Some countries said restrictions on food exports should be outlawed.

Several argued that [agriculture](#) must be at the heart of the negotiations and should be included in any effort to reach early agreement because subsidies and trade barriers in the sector seriously distort markets and because it is essential for development in many countries.

A number of developing countries said members should heed the ministerial declaration of the "Friends of Development" group (document [WT/MIN\(11\)/17](#)).

As in the [previous sessions](#), a number of delegations commented on suggestions that the WTO should start to look at new issues such as climate change. Some favoured this. Some others said new issues should be discussed after the Doha Round is completed. Some opposed bringing climate change into the WTO, arguing that the WTO is a trade organization, not an environmental one.

Process. A number of members focused on how the negotiations are conducted. Some simply repeated their concern that the talks should be "transparent" (information shared fully among all participants), "inclusive" (involving all members) and "bottom-up" (ideas coming from the members, and not imposed on them).

Some went further, complaining that the ["elements for political guidance"](#) document did not reflect the views of the full membership because some were not represented (see also "Position on the document 'Elements for Political Guidance' ", document [WT/MIN\(11\)/W/4](#)). They warned that they will find it difficult to be flexible in forthcoming discussions if the negotiating system remains unchanged. (General Council Chairperson Yonov Frederick Agah, Nigeria's ambassador and WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy explained the origins of the document on [24 November 2011](#) and [30 November 2011](#).)