

Statement on Supporting the Multilateral Trading System and Resisting Protectionism

Meeting of APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade

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We, the APEC Ministers responsible for Trade, gathering for our XVI meeting in Sapporo, Japan, express our strong commitment to the multilateral trading system and our unwavering determination to bring the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) to a successful conclusion as soon as possible.

(Promoting the Doha Development Agenda)

1. The strengthened multilateral trading system is a source of economic growth, development and stability. Bearing in mind that further reform and liberalization of trade policies will bolster economic recovery, we reaffirmed our resolve to seek an ambitious, balanced, and prompt conclusion to the DDA, consistent with its mandate, built on the progress achieved, including with regard to modalities.
2. We candidly assessed the current state of the DDA and are deeply concerned about the current impasse of the negotiations. We shared the recognition that, in order to further the negotiations, it is essential to accelerate the exercise to find an agreeable balance of interests, and strengthen political engagement at all levels toward a final decision.
3. We agreed to support the process in each negotiating group in Geneva, and at the same time, we will renew the empowerment of our Representatives in Geneva and Senior Officials to move the Doha work forward by holding active negotiations in all appropriate fora and configurations, with our engagement as necessary. We will engage in horizontal discussions to seek the path toward the end game. A final package will command consensus only if it delivers meaningful new trade opportunities in all areas as well as substantial reductions in trade distortions.
4. Each economy will make a due contribution toward a DDA outcome. With a sense of collective responsibility, not only among APEC economies, but also with economies outside the region, the APEC economies, which stand to benefit significantly from open trade, will play a leading role toward achieving the conclusion of the DDA. We will report progress to APEC Leaders in Yokohama.
5. We reaffirm that the early conclusion of DDA negotiations will provide benefits to all WTO members, especially to developing members. We recognize the importance of Aid for Trade and trade finance so that the multilateral trading system would contribute to the sustainable development.

(Resisting Protectionism)

6. Some economic indicators show that the world economy is on its way to recovery, but the lingering high unemployment rates may give rise to political pressures to adopt protectionist measures. We recognize that the liberalization and facilitation of trade and investment is the key to maintaining and creating employment, and remain committed to rejecting all forms of protectionism, keeping our markets open, and taking steps to rollback trade distorting measures introduced during the crisis. We agreed to extend the commitment on standstill made by APEC Leaders in 2008 for another year (i.e. until 2011) and stand ready to extend this further, if necessary. We will continue to exercise maximum restraint in implementing measures that may be considered to be WTO consistent if they have a significant protectionist effect and promptly rectify such measures where implemented. We will also continue to remain vigilant to all signs of protectionism.
7. We recognize that trade monitoring efforts within the WTO have been functioning effectively so far, and appreciate the degree to which APEC has been involved in information sharing. We request that this information sharing be continued and encourage economies to continue to show transparency. In keeping with our pledge to maintain free and open markets, we will continue to undertake regular review of measures undertaken by APEC economies that impact on trade and investment based on reports prepared by the APEC Secretariat with inputs from the WTO, the APEC Business Advisory Council and other relevant bodies.