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Page: 1/2

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PROPOSAL ON MC10 MINISTERIAL DECLARATION - PART III

The following communication, dated 11 November 2015, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of the Republic of Korea.

1. Korea stands as a firm supporter of the principles and objectives underlying the multilateral trading system embodied in the WTO. While recognizing the significant achievements of the WTO over the past 20 years in all areas of its work, we are mindful of the challenges it faces especially regarding its negotiating function.

2. There exist widely differing perspectives on the negotiating function of the WTO and in particular the future of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) negotiations. Although we remain hopeful, it seems unlikely that the Members will be able to reach a common understanding on this question in the remaining time before the 10th Ministerial Conference (MC10) in December in Nairobi.

3. Korea believes that preserving the negotiating function of the WTO is a matter of paramount importance on which MC10 should place special attention. Addressing this issue should start with acknowledging the reality as it is while respecting different views, followed by a period of reflection and frank discussion to identify a way forward.

4. It is in this context that we submit the following textual proposal as an attempt to be true to the reality and chart a process to revitalize the negotiating function of the WTO. We propose the following course of action, not because we believe it is ideal or most desirable, but because we hope our proposal can provide a basis for endeavors to properly address the outstanding DDA issues and put the WTO's negotiating function back on track.

5. Korea reserves the right to make modifications to the proposal subject to the evolution of the discussions.

1 PART III - POST-NAIROBI WORK

1.1. We reaffirm our commitment to the WTO as the primary forum for trade negotiations, the implementation of rules, the fight against protectionism, dispute settlement, and the promotion of sustainable development through the integration of developing countries into the global trading system.

1.2. On the future of the Doha Development Agenda and the negotiating function of the WTO, we take note of significantly different perspectives, which remain very difficult to reconcile. Despite candid discussions and serious efforts, we have yet to reach an agreement on this key question.

1.3. We nonetheless agree that the outstanding issues of the DDA should continue to be addressed in the WTO. We reaffirm the principle that the core sensitivities of Members should be respected, including through appropriate special and differential treatment and less than full reciprocity for developing countries, which is essential to helping Members reach a consensus in trade negotiations.

1.4. Based on this common understanding, we instruct the officials to continue deliberations on how best to deal with these issues, with the aim of agreeing on a way forward before the end of 2016. We ask them to identify a negotiating approach conducive to an agreement, while taking advantage of the significant progress which has been made so far, including Ministerial Declarations and other Decisions adopted in the context of the DDA, to the extent that it contributes to building consensus.

1.5. We agree that the WTO should have the ability to take on, at least on an exploratory basis, any trade-related issues deemed necessary in order to stay relevant and in keeping with the evolution of the global economy. We further agree to undertake the exploration of such issues in a manner that does not undermine the ongoing work to deal with outstanding issues.

1.6. We underscore the ever-growing importance of coherence in global economic policy-making, which was well articulated in the Declaration on the Contribution of the WTO to Achieving Greater Coherence in Global Economic Policy Making adopted in Marrakesh in April 1994. We welcome recent initiatives for cooperation with other international organizations, and encourage the further strengthening of such collaboration in pursuit of common objectives such as promoting sustainable development through trade.
