

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

RESTRICTED

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Negotiating Group on Trade Facilitation

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Held in the Centre William Rappard
on 16-20 July 2007

Chairman: H.E. Mr. Eduardo Ernesto Sperisen-Yurt (Guatemala)

1. The Chairman recalled that the proposed agenda for the meeting had been circulated in WTO/AIR/3047. As Members would have gathered from the airgram, the meeting aimed at furthering the negotiating process by offering a fresh opportunity to table new proposals and react to the contributions previously received – all of this in a novel format.
2. In addition, Members would be invited to issue their customary invitation to relevant international organizations to attend the Group's next meeting on an ad hoc basis.
3. The agenda was adopted.
4. The Chairman said that, before moving to the first agenda item, he wished to address the issue of reporting to the Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC). Members would have received the fax sent out by the Chairmen of the General Council and of the TNC in which they announced the upcoming meetings of their bodies and made reference to "hear[ing] reports from the Chairs of all the bodies reporting to the TNC".
5. In response to their request, he had prepared a draft report the contents of which he wished to share with Members. As announced at the June consultations, Members would find the report to be a fairly short statement which essentially pointed to the compilation document as an indication of where the negotiations stood, as Members had done when preparing for Hong Kong. This was complemented by an explanation affirming the document's "work-in-progress" status – as opposed to a consensus product – and underlining the intention to continue negotiating on the basis of the third generation proposals and their revisions and supplements.
6. More specifically, what he had thought of reporting was the following: "The negotiations on Trade Facilitation continue to make steady progress, in a transparent and inclusive manner, on all aspects of the negotiating mandate, based on Members' contributions as compiled in document TN/TF/W/43/Rev.11. Valuable progress was also being made on the identification of trade facilitation needs and priorities, development aspects, cost implications and inter-agency cooperation. The textual proposals compiled in document TN/TF/W/43/Rev.11 represent a significant advance, but not agreement, and were without prejudice to the right of Members to put forward new contributions. It was also understood that they required further refinement and negotiation in line with the modalities set out in Annex D of the July Package and the agreement contained in Annex E of the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration."

7. As mentioned before, this was still a draft which would not be finalized before the end of the week in order to give Members more time for further reflection, but he had wanted to already share this draft with delegations at this stage.

8. With that, he wanted to move to the first formal point on the agenda and look at both new proposals and contributions previously received.

A. PROPOSALS AND REACTIONS TO THE CONTRIBUTIONS PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED

9. The Chairman said that the first and primary item on the agenda sought to advance the negotiating business by inviting new contributions and allowing for additional reactions to the proposals received before. It would sound very familiar to Members as it had been a regular item of their deliberations and a key focus of the Negotiating Group's work from the very start.

10. At the same time, it was clear that the discussions under this heading would not represent business as usual in a number of regards. Not only would they take place in a modified format, as suggested at the previous Negotiating Group (NG) meeting and agreed upon in the subsequent open-ended Chair consultations held at the end of last month. But they would also take place at a crossroads of the negotiating calendar as Members approached the mid-year period and a crucial stage of the Doha Round deliberations as a whole.

11. With respect to the modified format, Members already had had a chance to discuss it in quite some detail both at the June NG session and in the consultations held thereafter. The main change related to the duration of the discussions – a whole week instead of the usual two days – which was meant to provide Members with the necessary time to enter into more in-depth discussions of the proposals on the table. It was also hoped to facilitate the participation of capital-based experts who might find it easier to support the deliberations under these terms. In this context, he wished to draw attention to the generous support provided by the Norwegian Government who sponsored the attendance of experts from LDC countries in the current discussions, which marked a major step ahead with respect to those Members' active participation in the debate.

12. This extended time for discussions and reflection had been repeatedly requested by several delegations and he considered it to be most useful as well. Members would therefore have the opportunity to look into each of the mandate's main pillars – technical assistance and capacity building, special and differential treatment, the three GATT Articles and the issue of customs cooperation – in a much more detailed way.

13. The second novelty related to the possibility of complementing the Chair-led discussions with exchanges amongst Members in various forms. This had already been a de facto practice in the past – which was why one could not really speak of introducing a novel element in that regard – but there had been calls for bringing those activities more closely under a common umbrella and for firmly embedding them into the NG's work. This was what the new format sought to deliver. There would be plenty of time for delegations to meet, in whatever format they chose, over the course of the next few days to work on the various proposals at hand.

14. While it would be their liberty to organize themselves as they saw fit, he strongly urged every Member to make those activities as inclusive as possible and to place a premium on transparency by giving full and accurate accounts on their results.

15. Some Members had already responded to this request by setting up their planned initiatives in open-ended format and announcing their time and focus well in advance. He hoped that others would follow this positive example.

16. In insisting on those transparency requirements, he also wished to underline that testing a new format did not amount to dispensing with a well-established philosophy that had guided Members right from the start. As already mentioned at the June consultations, he continued to place the utmost importance on the inclusive, bottom-up working method that was key to the Group's success so far. This was why he stressed – and wished to reiterate – his firm belief that those additional activities, while being a valuable complement to the NG's work, could never become a substitute for it. He therefore assured Members of there being no intention to change the underlying negotiating philosophy in any way. All that was sought was to give work a new dynamic and inject additional momentum to the debate. This was why Members would find all activities by the Chair to be open-ended and fully inclusive.

17. Another element of continuity related to the interactive nature of the discussions that he equally wished to maintain. He therefore planned on sticking to the traditional process of having most of the discussions take place in informal mode, limiting formal elements to the introduction of new proposals and statements Members expressly requested to make for the record. On that basis, he now wished to move to the new proposals on the table and into informal mode.

18. The following discussions were held in informal mode with the exception of the following statements:

19. The representative of Turkey introduced document TN/TF/W/120/Rev.1, explaining that it was a revision of the earlier proposal TN/TF/W/120 introduced at the last NG meeting in June. The reason for submitting a revision was to transform the "main elements" presented in the earlier submission into draft text so that it could be included in the Secretariat's compilation document. It was therefore only an editorial change and not one in substance, with the different formatting being the only real change compared to the previous proposal. Since the original document had already been presented last year, the current presentation would limit itself to a brief reminder of its contents.

20. Relating to GATT Article X, the proposal related to advance rulings relating to the implementation of customs rules on tariffs and origin. Turkey had already declared its support for the concept of advance rulings which was a concept falling under the framework of GATT Article X as an administrative decision of general application. Turkey considered it to be a trade facilitating instrument which allowed to ensure the security and predictability of customs operations. While the majority of the elements proposed by Turkey paralleled with the proposals on advance rulings presented by other Members, the scope of application was restricted to advance rulings on two subjects: origin and tariffs.

21. Delegations would recall that the Agreement on Rules of Origin already contained the principle of advance rulings on origin. The current proposal therefore did not present a novelty. It would not imply any overlap. Advance rulings on both preferential and non-preferential rules of origin should be included in order to discipline them and to recognize them as a trade facilitation (TF) instrument. As regards advance rulings on tariffs, it represented a compromise on the matter in relation to tariff classification and the areas most recognized and most used by traders looking for an interpretation and decision of the customs administration for their regular operations. Advance rulings should be made public in order to give an idea regarding the application of customs rules in similar cases and to ensure transparency whilst equally protecting the confidentiality of information and data specified by the applicant for an advance ruling.

22. The proposal also provided for the possibility of revising an advance ruling with legitimate objectives. Turkey's customs law offered traders the possibility to use advance rulings in the case of a revision for a supplementary period of time in order to avoid any damage resulting from the implementation of a contract concluded earlier based on an issued advance ruling. This option should also be provided for in the final result of the negotiations as a useful trade facilitation instrument.

23. The representative of Turkey presented proposal TN/TF/W/146 on transit quotas in road transportation, informing that the submission was also co-sponsored by Georgia. The proposal sought to eliminate the transit quotas faced in road transportation that had a negative impact on trade. During Turkey's bilateral meetings with some Members, Turkey had realized that there was a lack of information on the quota system applied in road transportation. Thus, Turkey had decided to provide some basic information on the matter.

24. The proposal was restricted to the road transportation issue. However, Turkey did not rule out the possibility of inserting provisions on restrictive practices in other modes of transportation. GATT Article V regulated freedom of transit. The essence of the Article was that transit traffic should not be subject to discretionary delays and discriminatory practices. In other words, Members should not employ their territorial rights on transit traffic in a way that distorted trade. As laid down in the July Package, one of the main goals of the trade facilitation negotiations was to further clarify the Article and develop measures that would help the effective implementation of its provisions.

25. Trade-related transaction costs such as freight charges and other logistical expenses were one of the crucial determinants of a country's ability to participate in the global economy. In some cases, transport costs determined potential access to foreign markets. The costs of transporting developing country exports to foreign markets were of much greater influence to trade than tariffs. Transit quotas were one of the main elements that added to the transaction costs. They were generally regulated by bilateral road transportation arrangements. The representatives of the two countries came together regularly under the legal framework laid down by those arrangements and decided on the details of the transit traffic regime, including fees and charges, the procedures and the number of transit quotas known as transit permit certificates. Unfortunately, bilateral platforms were not always sufficient to solve the problems experienced in transit traffic. It was not easy to overcome the existing elements of arbitrariness through bilateral arrangements, which significantly harmed the principles of predictability and transparency.

26. This was the main reason why Turkey wished to bring the issue to the multilateral platform. Experiencing steady export growth, Turkey suffered restrictive practices in transit traffic. In some places, the number of transit permits granted to Turkey did not increase in parallel with the export growth. This insufficient increase in transit permits functioned as a non-tariff barrier to Turkish traders. Due to the insufficient number of transit permits, important delays were being experienced and haulers were encountering high costs which resulted in a persistent loss of competitive power.

27. Turkey believed that those restrictions did not comply with the spirit of the multilateral system and GATT Article V specifically. Moreover, Turkey did not observe that restrictions were based on objective criteria. Rather, in most cases, those restrictions were seen as a way to restrict transit traffic and were clearly affecting bilateral trade as well as trade with third countries. Therefore, Turkey believed that transit quotas should be eliminated and Members should be allowed non-discriminatory and unrestricted transit opportunities except for legitimate cases set out in GATT Articles XX and XXI.

28. The representative of the United States introduced proposal TN/TF/W/144/Rev.1, explaining that it represented a revised text on expedited shipments. The US was also pleased to provide a room document which answered many of Members' questions. At the last meeting, when introducing TN/TF/W/144, the United States had been very pleased with the number of questions and the amount of engagement. The US had tried to answer the questions and to respond to the requests for clarification and more precision, and to provide a text that would address those concerns. That was why the US presented a revised text in the form of W/144/Rev.1 as well as the room document.

29. Since the great benefits of the proposal had already been explained at the last meeting, the current presentation would focus on the basic changes that had been made. They could be found in

paragraphs 1(c), 1(d), 1(g), the chapeau to paragraph 2 and in the definition section where one could find an improved definition of "expedited shipments", a new definition of "expedited shipment provider" and a new definition for the term "manifest".

30. With respect to paragraph 1(c), Members had expressed concerns regarding the previous draft calling for release to be provided with a minimum of documentation required. The phrase "minimum of documentation" had struck some Members as too vague as standard to be able to be administered. What the US therefore had tried to do was to get rid of that phrase and to have the release be based on the manifest. There was now a simple term "the manifest", which was internationally recognized.

31. The second important modification consisted of changing the words "clearance of expedited shipments" to "release" which was easier from an administrative point of view. Many Members, including the United States, physically released shipments based on a manifest while the process of clearance was a more formal process which could include the submission of customs forms and the calculation on payment of duties and could actually occur later than the release. Numerous concerns had been expressed at the last meeting about whether countries could finish their clearance procedures in time. That was why the US replaced this with the word "release" in paragraph (c). The idea was that Members, to the extent possible, physically released expedited shipments based on the manifest generated by the expedited shipment provider. The changes to paragraph (c) were both more conducive to trade facilitation and responded to the concerns expressed at the last meeting.

32. In terms of the definition of the manifest, paragraph (c) had a new term which was "the manifest". A definition was provided of the manifest on the second page. Basically, a manifest was a document used by the global expedited shipment industry and contained all the relevant identifying information about the goods being shipped as well as information about the sender and the recipient. The list set forth corresponded to the initial response given at the last meeting to queries from Members. It had been considered useful to incorporate this into the text. That was why details had been added to the concept.

33. Changes had also been made to paragraph 1(d). The US had wanted to make a wording change concerning arrival. As a result, there was a slightly different phrasing. The concept of one-hour clearance of expedited shipments had further been changed to one-hour release, because the main objective was to ensure that the expedited shipments were physically released within one hour to allow for their on-time delivery. From the US perspective, it was not as important for the expedited shipments to have gone through the formal clearance process. That should not be the focus of the commitments which was why it had been changed to release. Clearance could sometimes occur after release. That made it easier from an administrative point of view. The separation of release from clearance was a concept that was also reflected in proposal TN/TF/W/146 by Canada and Switzerland.

34. In paragraph 1(g) the "formal entry documents" phrase used in the original text had triggered many questions. It was no longer contained in the revised text.

35. The US had also considered Members' questions regarding paragraph 2. The chapeau had been revised to more logically link separate customs procedures, the subject of the requirement in paragraph 1, to the conditions that a government might impose upon the expedited shipment provider, in order for those special customs procedures referred to in paragraph 1 to apply. The chapeau to paragraph 2 now just provided a logical legal link. What was relevant were the definitions laid out in the definition section.

36. During the last NGTF meeting, Members had raised many questions about the definition of expedited shipments. The point had been taken that it seemed to be circular and therefore, deficient. Based on in-house consultations and consultations with stakeholders, the US proposed a new definition of expedited shipments that was related to the operations of an expedited shipment

provider. That definition was set out in the definition's section, with a degree of specificity. Basically, the idea was that this definition set forth the services and capabilities that an expedited shipment provider in a company must provide as part of the operations in order to be eligible for the separate customs procedures. This was a very specialized kind of operation. The US had tried to be very specific about exactly what kind of operation it was that would basically deliver goods in such a timely manner to companies, that, for example, needed spare parts or needed a delivery for their operations in a very timely manner. It was just anything that arrived quickly through the mail. This was the particular type of operation which companies used for their manufacturing needs.

37. The United States hoped that the informal room document would supplement what the US had said today. It was an attempt to continue the bottom-up approach everybody was proud of in this Negotiating Group. The US expected further refinements to this proposal and looked forward to further inputs and questions from Members.

38. The representative of the Philippines, speaking on behalf of the Core Group, ACP Group, African Group and LDC Group introduced proposal TN/TF/W/147 on technical assistance and capacity building (TACB) and S&D, explaining that it was the result of a collaboration by those four developing country groups. He was very grateful for the work and efforts of the experts and capital officials in contributing to this proposal which built on earlier submissions by the Core Group and other groups to the NGTF.

39. The sponsors of the proposal had learned from a number of informal meetings, workshops and consultations with other Members. They hoped that the present communication would substantively contribute to the TF negotiations in ensuring that the principle of special and differential treatment was fully reflected in the negotiated outcome and that the implementation of TF obligations by developing and least-developed Members was linked to the provision of TACB support, while fostering a sense of partnership between donors and recipients, which was the compromise reached in Annex D of the July Framework, in an effort to include one of the four Singapore issues in the Single Undertaking. The sponsors of the submission were all there to contribute and learn from other Members. The paper was a contribution and a work in progress in order to come up with a TF agreement that would be beneficial to all.

40. In terms of the general concepts of the paper, the objective was to establish a balance between the contributions of developed and developing Members in terms of mutually beneficial commitments on Trade Facilitation. Both the July 2004 framework and the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration stressed the importance of providing precise, effective and operational TACB to developing Members. It was therefore important that the NGTF established clearly defined operational mechanisms to ensure that TACB was provided to those Members who needed it. Similarly, the WTO should play an important role in coordinating and facilitating the provision of TACB from the donor community, as well as developed members, to commit to providing adequate modalities and mechanisms for developing and least-developed Members to have access to technical assistance for trade facilitation.

41. On the proposed measures on Trade Facilitation, the proposals submitted by Members had been useful and valuable in enhancing cross-border trade in goods. But, in the sponsors' assessment of the proposals, there were continuing aspects of implementation difficulties, individually or collectively. That was why these textual proposals must be studied and agreed upon on their individual merits, to ensure that appropriate S&D treatment could be incorporated therein. To address the potential implementation difficulties, new TF commitments should be approached in a way that would enable developing Members to initially commit to a specified minimal level of commitments, and, at their discretion, progressively go into higher levels as and when capacity existed. Developed Members, on the other hand, were expected to undertake all commitments upon entry into force of any TF Agreement.

42. With respect to the issue of needs assessment and TACB before signing the Agreement, the sponsors recalled that both the July 2004 framework and Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration stressed the importance of the provision of TACB to allow all developing Members to fully participate in the negotiations and therefore called for TACB during the negotiations. In this regard, technical assistance should also be provided to allow developing Members' experts to effectively participate in the negotiations. TACB was also vital to assist developing Members to undertake capacity self-assessment to determine the commitments for which domestic implementation capacity already existed and for which technical assistance was required.

43. Once the TF Agreement entered into force, there should also be sufficient time to allow developing members to develop a plan for the implementation of commitments and undertake domestic measures that might be needed to enable developing Members to implement mandatory commitments.

44. TACB should be provided on the basis of the request and specifications of the requesting Member. In the spirit of mutual partnership, developing members requesting TACB could consult with donors to determine the TACB projects or activities that would be required to build capacity for specific commitments. The TACB recipient under the submission would be allowed to determine when implementation capacity had been acquired, or it might also work out a mutual arrangement with the donor for the joint determination of capacity acquisition. The implementation of mandatory commitments was contemplated to be undertaken by developing Members after a time period when it had been clearly determined that capacity had been acquired.

45. Regarding the role of the WTO Trade Facilitation Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Support Unit (TFTACBSU), the Groups believed that Members could arrive at beneficial results through their discussions, through ensuring that the WTO played an important role in coordination and facilitation of TACB resources from donors to developing members. With that, a TF TACB Support Unit was contemplated to be created within the WTO to handle such a function. The TFTACBSU would receive requests for TACB from developing members, as well as assist LDCs in the preparation of their TACB requests. This Unit could also help with matching donors and recipients for the provision of technical assistance requirements.

46. With respect to the issue of flexibility and S&D treatment in levels of commitments, the Groups believed that appropriate S&D treatment could be provided to developing Members under which they could identify the minimal level of implementation of a measure to which they would commit to be bound. Any further implementation beyond the bound level would be undertaken by the developing Member, based on their domestic needs and capacity. Members might also indicate limitations or restrictions that they might wish to place on the implementation of their commitments. This would provide for effective, precise, and operational S&D treatment that went beyond transition periods, as provided for in Annex D of the July 2004 framework.

47. S&D treatment was necessary because of the varied development and economic conditions and circumstances that developing Members faced. One way of ensuring special and differential treatment would be to include a specific provision that safeguarded domestic regulatory flexibility for developing Members when required for reasons of national development policy.

48. With respect to exceptions to commitments, GATT Articles XX and XXI would apply to any TF agreement. Least-developed Members would not be required to implement any commitments unless their requests for the provision of necessary TACB had been adequately responded to in a timely manner, on a demand-driven, needs-based, sustainable basis. Also, when an LDC Member had acquired capacity to implement any Trade Facilitation commitments, the implementation of these commitments should be determined by the LDC Member concerned.

49. Another feature of the submission was the possibility of an early warning mechanism. During the TF retreat held in Evian, the idea of such a mechanism had been brought up. The sponsors of this proposal were of the view that there was some merit in the suggestion that a developing or LDC Member would be able to inform the WTO that there might be delays in implementing a specific commitment.

50. As regards dispute settlement, Members were called upon to first exhaust the use of consultations, good offices, conciliation, or mediation as mechanisms for ensuring compliance with commitments, including commitments on the part of developed members to provide TACB modalities and support itself. Dispute settlement was contemplated as the last resort. No developing or least-developed Member was expected to be brought to dispute settlement proceedings to enforce compliance with the commitments that such developing or LDC member was not yet contemplating.

51. It was hoped that this submission from developing country groupings would help the Negotiating Group further clarify and operationalize the needs of developing and least-developed Members for TACB and S&D. The proposal was work in progress and, hopefully, a contribution to the discussions towards drafting of a TF Agreement. The developing country groupings presenting the submission stood ready to work with other delegations to further improve their work and hoped to have more constructive discussions with Members throughout the negotiating week. They appreciated very much the presence of capital officials from developing countries as well as from the developed ones and looked forward to interactively discussing the submission with them.

52. The representative of China presented proposal TN/TF/W/148, saying that, so far, more than 10 proposals regarding risk management had been put on the table by Members which reflected the importance they attached to the subject. Risk management was one of the modern management tools which had been adopted by customs administrations of many countries. The experience with them strongly indicated that the application of risk management in an appropriate manner could be very conducive to achieving the objectives of maintaining a balance between effective customs or border control and expediting the movement of goods across borders.

53. In the context of trade facilitation, China was of the view that great efforts should be made to establish a linkage between the adoption of risk management and the specific objective of facilitating trade so as to emphasize the role of risk management in terms of trade facilitation. China believed that by adopting risk management techniques in customs administration unnecessary interventions to trade could be minimized to the utmost and the movement of goods could be expedited.

54. Based on these considerations and on the assessment of needs and priorities, China presented the following textual proposal to the Negotiating Group for Members' consideration.

55. China's proposal was for Members to apply risk management techniques with the purpose to reduce, to the extent possible, physical inspection of goods. Members should concentrate their physical inspection on high risk goods while expediting the release of low risk goods and providing facilitation to compliant traders. It was China's view that physical inspection was a measure conducted by customs to satisfy themselves that the nature, origin, condition, quantity and value of the goods were in accordance with the particulars furnished in the goods declaration so that the goods could be identified that were in compliance with the customs and other relevant laws. In this regard, China considered it one of the essential measures for customs or border control purposes. However, one also had to be aware of the other side of the matter in terms of the fact that physical inspection was in fact a kind of intervention to the smooth flow of the goods. If it was to be conducted inappropriately, an unnecessary delay for the release of goods at the border might easily occur. Therefore, China's proposal was to apply risk management techniques to concentrate the physical inspection on high risk goods and to reduce physical inspection on goods to the extent possible.

56. An additional suggestion was that the scope of application for risk management included, but was not limited to, the processes of customs supervision and control, post-clearance audit, tariff classification, valuation and analysis of customs statistics. Appropriate criteria to select traders to be eligible for the different treatment should be established accordingly. Selectivity of goods for physical inspection should be carried out in a non-discriminatory manner to avoid trade obstacles. China's consideration behind these proposals were only to the diversity of economic circumstances of each member country but also the responsibilities of their customs administrations. Preferences in managing the risk by customs administrations were different. It was not realistic to design a unified approach for all the Members on customs risk management. However, to ensure fairness and transparency and to avoid an abusive impact of risk management techniques in creating any disguised obstacles to trade, some basic principles or disciplines should at least be appropriately applied in that respect.

57. Another proposed measure was to apply the standards and instruments developed by relevant international organizations, such as WCO, whenever practicable. China was of the view that for better implementation of possible future obligations by Members, the established work done by other international organizations, especially the relevant instruments developed by the WCO, should be taken as a basis in adopting risk management techniques.

58. With respect to the issue of S&D and TACB, China understood this to be an essential issue that had to be considered in a cross-cutting manner and that it required further intensive discussions by the Group. The provisions proposed in the present paper merely emphasized China's deep concern and willingness to work together with all Members to find a proper solution in that regard.

59. The Chairman informed that, as a result of there not having been any objections from Members to the draft he had presented at the beginning of the week as his planned TNC report, there would not be any changes to the text apart from the reference to the compilation document being one to TN/TF/W/43/Rev.12 instead of Rev.11. The Secretariat would prepare an update (Rev.12) to incorporate the latest proposals presented at the present meeting which would then be the document referenced in the report to the TNC.

B. AD HOC ATTENDANCE OF RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING THE IMF, OECD, UNCTAD, WCO AND THE WORLD BANK, AT THE NEXT MEETING OF THE NEGOTIATING GROUP

60. The Chairman suggested inviting relevant international organizations, including the IMF, OECD, UNCTAD, WCO and the World Bank to attend the next formal meeting of the NG on an ad hoc basis, as provided for in the Work Plan.

61. It was so agreed.

C. OTHER BUSINESS

62. The Chairman addressed the issue of the NG's next meeting. Members would have noticed that the Group had come to the end of the year's first negotiating semester which equally marked the end of the pre-determined negotiating dates.

63. This had made it necessary to enquire about possibilities to meet in the autumn, in consultation with the WTO Secretariat. Those inquiries had shown for there to be an opportunity to meet again at the beginning of October, starting as of Monday 1, when Members could have a plenary discussion, and continuing on 2 and 3 October with informal, open-ended Chair consultations before then closing the meeting with another plenary session, following the structure applied for the current negotiating week. Details on the precise structure would be communicated later on.

64. It was so agreed.
 65. The meeting was adjourned.
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